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Theodore Roosevelt and the World War: Politics, Patriotism, and Preparedness

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This Thesis for the M.A. degree by

R. Jerry Cantlon

THEODORE ROOSEVELT AND THE WORLD WAR:

Politics, Patriotism, and Preparedness

History

by

R. Jerry Cantlon

B.A., William Jewell College, 1949

Carol W. Bloude

Robert L. Peterson

Date

August 8, 1955

A Thesis submitted to the Faculty of the Graduate
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Cantlon, R. Jerry (M. A., History)

Theodore Roosevelt and the World War:

Politics, Patriotism, and Preparedness

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Thesis directed by Ins. R. Jerry Cantlon

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This thesis was undertaken with the view that

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Carol Wobelohe

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Theodore Roosevelt and the World War:

Politics, Patriotism, and Preparedness

Thesis directed by Instructor Carl Ubbelohde

Unlike most of his predecessors and successors, Theodore Roosevelt long outlived his Presidential years. Because of his unusual physical and mental vigorousness, he could not resign himself to the customary secreted existence of American ex-Presidents. Instead, he maintained a very active interest in politics and national affairs, and his atypical activity in these matters assured him a continuing place in the public spotlight and of being a perpetual target for journalists, authors, and critics. His every utterance concerning domestic issues, national preparedness, international morality, and Administration ineptitudes was interpreted as indicating selfish personal ambitions. His accusers defined him as a man who would not hesitate to stoop to any level in order to achieve the fulfillment of his desires, while his defenders translated Roosevelt as a great leader, a seer, and as the greatest living American.

This thesis was undertaken with the view that further study into the last decade of Roosevelt's public life would expose a more moderate and realistic position between the extreme opinions about him. It is believed that the research involved did reveal such a position.

His dogmatic and self-asserting manner provided a basis for many types of charges against him. Since his political ambitions were not nearly so apparent to him as to his antagonists, Roosevelt was unable to attribute any credence to these charges. He appears to have been the conscious patriot and the unconscious politician, playing his unique role to the very hilt.

This abstract of about 243 words is approved as to form and content. I recommend its publication.

Signed

Carl Ubbelohde

Instructor in charge of dissertation

PREFACE

As an ex-President, Theodore Roosevelt served his country uniquely. Unlike any of the men in American history who had formerly served as Chief Executives, Roosevelt remained in the public limelight, active in national politics. From 1912, the approximate beginning of this study, he was especially vigorous in promoting domestic reform, advocating preparedness, preaching international morality, and opposing the Wilson Administration. This thesis is an attempt to bring out Roosevelt's contributions to his country and his influences upon the national character in these last years of his life, and at the same time to understand the degree to which his machinations were dictated by purely political considerations and/or by patriotic fervor.

Research into the questions surrounding Theodore Roosevelt's post-presidential life indicates that this highly controversial character left few authorities in the gap between the extremists, who attempted to label him either a saint or a devil. However, there appears to be a middle ground; and it is the purpose of this dissertation to bring it out.

Roosevelt was often accused of opposing Wilson purely for the sake of political opportunism and of breaking with various political leaders as well as with the Republican Party as a result of self-seeking. While there may be some validity to these charges, it seems naive to

suggest that these were his sole motivations. He was convinced of his own high patriotism, and he was self-assured that his words and deeds emanated only from it. He seemed unable to convince himself that these same actions could justifiably be interpreted as resulting from narrow, selfish political ambition. Although both politics and patriotism were omnipresent characteristics of Roosevelt, politics was an influence within him of which he was largely unconscious. It is not surprising, therefore, that he fought each struggle to its bitter end.

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CHAPTER I

ROOSEVELT: THE CONTROVERSIAL CHARACTER

It seemed he always knew where he was going. Life appeared to hold few unanswered questions for the mind of Theodore Roosevelt. His existence for over fifty years had been one filled with excitement, but it was an experience that gave every indication of following a calculated and definitive pattern. Even when the politico powers-that-were deemed it advisable to channel his accelerating strength into the American canyon of political oblivion--the Vice-Presidency--his destiny was not to be denied. With only the force of one bullet standing between him and the highest office of the land, providence and the omnipresent Rooseveltian luck hastened to provide the motivating munition. His transfer from one end of Pennsylvania Avenue to the other removed the hand of Theodore Roosevelt from the innocuous Senate gavel and placed it on the pilot wheel of the ship of state--a development which brought limitless disquietude to his adversaries.

Twelve years later, as the United States approached the problems of almost-total world conflict, Roosevelt found himself in an almost helpless state of frustration for the first time in his life. He was only in his middle 50's, a moderately young age considering that he had already had more high positions and high honors than most men usually accumulate in a complete lifetime. He was too young to cease to care about his reputation or to abandon political ambitions even though he had reached the pinnacle of political success

--the Presidency of the United States. Moreover, the Roosevelt success was not limited to his abilities and achievements in politics. He was a prolific writer, especially on historical and botanical subjects; and he sustained a voluminous correspondence with persons throughout the country and the world, which, like his conversation, sometimes reached avalanche proportions and inundated his subjects.

Though only a colonel, he had emerged from the Spanish-American War as a hero of wider national acclaim than any of his superiors. His flair for the dramatic had brought him to resign as Assistant Secretary of the Navy that he might join the call to the colors; and his torrid patriotism led him to undergo physical endurances of combat which could be expected only of younger men. He was truly a "perennial volunteer,"¹ and this escapade with the Rough Riders in Cuba was to give him the keys to the White House and a tenure of seven years as President.² What then, afterwards, could logically be the object of the energies of so young an ex-President, so vigorous and bombastic? The perplexity of this problem

¹ During his lifetime, Roosevelt had proposed the "harum-scarum" riders of his ranch as a cavalry battalion during U. S. troubles with Mexico in the 1880's, displayed jingo enthusiasm at the time of American trouble with Britain over the Venezuela boundary, shown an enthusiasm for the annexation of the Hawaiian Islands despite risks of war with Japan, led a voluntary cavalry unit in the Spanish-American War, and displayed a determination to lead a division of volunteers in the first World War. Richard Hofstadter, The American Political Tradition (New York, 1954), 213. Hereafter cited as Hofstadter, Tradition.

² Stuart P. Sherman, Americans (New York, 1923), 277. Hereafter cited as Sherman, Americans.

ultimately brought to him a condition of deep frustration and heartbreak.

As the stormy second decade of the new century began to unfold, Theodore Roosevelt found it impossible to unshackle himself from the binding inhibitions which had enveloped him since his political defeat of 1912. Here was a natural-born leader of men, a man who had been in positions of military and political leadership and who seemed to thrive well on their challenge. But in the years of the Wilsonian Era, which he did not outlive, he seemed relegated to the status of a "has-been" in these two fields of endeavor, fields which contained his primary interests. Yet, as the world became embroiled in its most terrible holocaust, Theodore Roosevelt was hailed by countless of his fellow countrymen, partisan and bipartisan alike, as the greatest living American.

After his parricidal attack on his own party during the fateful convention period of 1912, this man seemed destined for political oblivion. Such would surely have been a certainty for anyone with less physical and mental virility. The critical nature of world events should possibly be credited in sustaining Roosevelt's national stature. It is generally believed that he had his sights set for 1916, and the Republican nomination--following the certain defeat of Taft and a reuniting of the party under his leadership. However, this was not to be for the man who was lured into the 1912 political imbroglio as the Progressive standard

bearer. In all probability, however, the healing effects of time, the nature of rapidly changing events, plus the efficacy of the Roosevelt political technique would have made possible the coveted Republican nomination in 1920, had he lived to that day.

Having absented himself from the country in 1913 in favor of an exploration in South America, and thus brought into play further the psychopathological analyses of his adversaries, the ex-President returned to the United States in time to experience and study the European crises of the summer of 1914. He had publicly stated that it would take some time for self-orientation on domestic and international affairs before he would be in a position to express his studied opinions thereon. And it was at the advent of hostilities in Europe that Roosevelt again began to speak out and sought to establish his position once again in the national spotlight. The ensuing two years, with their silent interplay of forces, were to determine the political future of this unique American figure. Probably the first big step which Roosevelt took toward developing a somewhat new status in American political affairs was to resign in June, 1914, as Contributing Editor of Outlook Magazine. In a letter to Lyman Abbott, Editor of the Outlook, he pointed out that developments over the past three or four years made it necessary for him to take a more active part in promoting throughout the country the principles of the Progressive Party.³ He further stated that he felt

³ Hofstadter, Tradition, 214.

honor bound to stand in strong opposition to the Administration, because it had stood for the "abandonment of the interest and honor of America" in international relations.⁴ He was convinced too that he should strike out at the failure of the President's policies in domestic economic matters.⁵ United States One of the greater challenges in any study of the life of Roosevelt is the analysis of his attitudes on various aspects of the World War, and how those attitudes are reconciled with any possible political ambitions which he might have had. Such is the purpose of this study. It is significant, in the light of future events, that Roosevelt's massive correspondence reveals a somewhat delayed formulation of opinion on the most important issue at the war's beginning--the German invasion of Belgium. As further development of this facet of the conflict will indicate, his initial and subsequent reactions to the affair were not the same, and in fact seemed somewhat contradictory. Originally, he was silent on the invasion issue, believing it to be merely one expected aspect of almost any war; then, within a few weeks, he became quite vocal in his demand that the wrong to Belgium be righted. Were it not for this change in opinion, his personal

⁴ Roosevelt-Lodge circle of Republicans. It was said of him This statement without question was aimed primarily at Secretary of State Bryan, whose methods and policies were anathema to Roosevelt.

⁵ accustomed to draw his inspiration from Oyster Bay." This letter to Lyman Abbott was acknowledged with the statement that "no man can be both the leader of a great political party and an editor of an independent journal." The Letters of Theodore Roosevelt, edited by Elting E. Morison, (8 vols., Cambridge, 1951-54), VII, 569. This work hereafter cited as Roosevelt, Letters.

campaign for preparedness throughout the ensuing three years would not have had its most effective overtone--international morality and decency.

This was an era which found Theodore Roosevelt in a unique position. Universally, ex-Presidents of the United States find themselves of a rare caste. This was especially true of "T. R.", who was never quite able to adjust to this eccentric status. Probably more than any other Chief Executive, Roosevelt had been (and still was) a familiar personality in the councils of Europe. And his extroversion had resulted in the development of a wide range of acquaintances and friendships at home and abroad. Among the prominent European personalities with whom he maintained correspondence were Dernburg, Von Stumm, Von Mack, Munsterberg, Kipling, Edward Grey, Spring-Rice, and Arthur Hamilton Lee.

With Cecil Arthur Spring-Rice, Roosevelt had developed an intimate friendship following the event of the latter's marriage to Alice Lee in Britain in 1886. At that time the distinguished Englishman served as Theodore Roosevelt's "best man". In 1912, Spring-Rice replaced James Bryce as British Ambassador to Washington, and at once joined the Roosevelt-Lodge circle of Republicans. It was said of him that he was "accredited to the White House, but he was accustomed to draw his inspiration from Oyster Bay."⁶

⁶ Frederic L. Paxson, American Democracy and the World War: The Pre-War Years, 1913-1917 (Boston, 1936), 34. Hereafter cited as Paxson, Pre-War Years.

⁷ "Mr. Roosevelt on the War," Outlook, CVII (August 15, 1914),

On the other side of the channel, Theodore Roosevelt had had much conversation with the Kaiser during his European visit in 1910; and these two personalities seemed to find great mutual interest in one another. It is evident, therefore, that Roosevelt had close associations both among treaty, leaders of the Central Powers and the Western Allies. This fact naturally resulted in suspicions and criticisms of him. Though he was an admitted Anglophile, Roosevelt was accused of having an affinity for Prussianism. Actually nothing deterred him from promoting his relationships on both sides of the front, a fact which was to prove invaluable to him as the war developed.

Unquestionably, Theodore Roosevelt was a zealous patriot. He displayed that characteristic at every turn of international events. He was also a master politician. His stature as a public personality was nurtured on these two traits. Though he had previously expressed opposition to the Wilson Administration, the war was only days old when he aptly stated that every American citizen should support any and all public officials who did all in their power to help the United States through the crisis unharmed, who maintained the honor of the United States, and who helped in securing peace and justice in the world.⁷ Cast in the light of his other statements at that particular time, this must be considered a true call for public unity behind the President and his administration. It should be noted that, to

⁷ "Mr. Roosevelt on the War," Outlook, CVII (August 15, 1914), 886.

this point, Roosevelt had not as yet found it in himself to be critical of the Wilson position on Germany's invasion of Belgium. In fact, he had stated in a letter to Hugo Munsterberg that he was "not prepared to say that in dire need the statesmen of a nation are not obliged to disregard any treaty, if keeping it may mean the most serious jeopardy to the House nation,"⁸ and thus suggested that a treaty is a scrap of view paper. Whether the Wilson and Roosevelt motives were the same, at least they agreed on a policy of inaction regarding Belgium. However, from almost this very instance onward, these two leaders seldom found themselves on common ground.

A relationship which had begun between them years previously and which held promise of developing into a warm friendship was very soon shattered beyond recognition and rehabilitation. From the days of the Roosevelt-Wilson luncheon in 1908 at Princeton University's presidential mansion, and their other cordial meetings, the country was to observe a transformation which culminated in an intense rivalry and a bitterness beyond description. Surely Theodore Roosevelt many times over must have regretted his statement to a friend in which he expressed the judgment that Woodrow Wilson was an able man who would make an

⁸ George H. Morry, Theodore Roosevelt and the Progressive Movement (Madison, 1946), 256. This work hereafter
Germany had had treaties with both Belgium and Luxembourg guaranteeing their neutrality. Roosevelt, Letters, VII, 795. Letter dated August 8, 1914. Interviewing (New York, 1919), 79.

¹¹ Sherman, Americans, 261.

"excellent" president of the United States.⁹ Without doubt, the development of enmity between them was largely a result of their antithetical personalities and views on the responsibilities of the President--a condition which seemed to become progressively more aggravated. The journalist Isaac F. Marcossan suggested that no two occupants of the White House ever expressed such extremes of personality and point of view as Woodrow Wilson and Theodore Roosevelt.¹⁰

In the period between the Spanish-American War and his death in 1919, Roosevelt is credited with the production of very significant alterations in the national psychology. During this era, his personality was accepted by many as being near to an incarnation of the national character.¹¹ His multitude of interests, exploring, history writing, while traveling, fighting the Spaniards, swapping views with royalty, reforming, stalking grizzlies, swimming Rock Creek and the Potomac with ambassadors, and building new canals and parties, together with his mental and physical speed and a sharp political acumen combined to create a masterful force in America. The influence of that force caused the "Unimaginative plutocratic psychology" of this country to

⁹ George E. Mowry, Theodore Roosevelt and the Progressive Movement (Madison, 1946), 256. This work hereafter cited as Mowry, Progressive Movement.

¹⁰ Isaac F. Marcossan, Adventures in Interviewing (New York, 1919), 79.

¹¹ Sherman, Americans, 266.
 Sherman, Americans, 261.

¹³ Ibid., 278. The term "practical men" was used by Roosevelt to be synonymous with "politicians".

be "steadily metamorphosed into the psychology of efficient, militant, imperialistic nationalism."¹² With his vast influence upon the American people, he sought to mould the national mind and feelings into his own likeness. He sought to make the national mind virile, daring, imaginative, aggressive, and eager, to make for America "a place in the sun." He set the example by magnifying the office of President, by concentrating power, and by teaching the public to look to the Federal Government as the controlling, dynamic, and creative center of American life. He was positively averse to the spirit of laissez-faire. In domestic affairs his policy generally alienated the "big interests" but won the support of the "plain people". In foreign affairs, however, the big interests supported Roosevelt, while the "plain people" were left somewhat dazzled, astonished, and perplexed. Further, it is said that when Roosevelt crossed swords with "practical" men, he almost always strengthened his position with the plain people.¹³ Professor Sherman of the University of Illinois and a contemporary of Roosevelt's made an interesting and rather thorough study of this ex-President and his relationship with the national psychology. His insights into the character and personality of the man seem to be among the most objective, and they are helpful in understanding the machinations of

¹² Sherman, Americans, 266.

¹³ Ibid., 278. The term "practical men" was used by Roosevelt to be synonymous with "politicians".

¹⁴ Sherman, Americans, 283.

this great American leader. Sherman notes the influence which Roosevelt had upon the "man on the street"; but he points out that when the Colonel offended them--as by his vindictive and ruthless onslaughts upon his successor and upon his great rival, and by his conduct of the Panama affair--they "began to doubt whether he had the magnanimity, the fairness of mind, the love of civil ways requisite to guide them towards the fulfillment of their historic destiny." Likewise, his habit of speaking scornfully of over-civilization and praise-fully of mere breeding and fighting raised the question in many minds as to whether he had an adequate "theory of ends" and whether he did not become so overwhelmed with his means as to sometimes forget his ends altogether.¹⁴

Roosevelt expressed a regard for peace. His critics, to be sure, would register this as political hash, for to them he made it plain that he loved and valued war. Because he vilified the pacifists, it is not surprising that many peace-desiring people doubted if he had even the slightest sympathy for their objectives. And his expressions of approval for the idea of arbitration always seemed to be conditioned upon the existence of a position of preponderant strength for his side.

Roosevelt's devotion to the art of fighting was such as to bring from him constant warnings to his country lest its young men become soft, lose their virile fighting virtues, and weaken the moral fibre of the nation. "Woe to the nation,"

¹⁴ Sherman, Americans, 283.

he avowed, "that does not make ready to hold its own in time of need against all who would harm it! And woe thrice over to the nation in which the average man loses the fighting edge...."¹⁵ In the Outlook, Roosevelt explained his emphasis on fighting by pointing out that ancient civilizations became physically, mentally, and morally weak or soft. Each then became pacifist in nature, and henceforth was "trodden under foot by some ruder people that had kept that virile fighting power the lack of which makes all other virtues useless and sometimes even harmful."¹⁶

Sherman, in describing the Rooseveltian influence upon the national mind, explains that the highest point of such achievement, the point at which his powerful personality most nearly succeeded in transforming the national character²⁰ from its original bias, was that in which he made it "half in love with military glory" and "half in love with empire-building...."¹⁷

Convinced that there was a myriad of activities far more interesting and rewarding than making money, Roosevelt made political eminence a righteous goal. He chose to carve his own existence from public life and its glories, rather than from opulence and ease. In his opinion, a man who inherited a fortune and then spent the remainder of his days

¹⁵ Theodore Roosevelt Cyclopedia, edited by Albert Bushnell Hart and Herbert Ronald Ferleger, (New York, 1941), 180.

¹⁶ Theodore Roosevelt, "The Dawn and Sunrise of History," Outlook, CXV (February 14, 1917), 274.

¹⁷ Sherman, Americans, 281.

in useless idleness was a "cootie on the body politic"; a pleasure-seeking life was not only undesirable but contemptible. During this period of American life, this concept was almost unique for one of his class.¹⁸

Roosevelt's imperialistic nature might have stemmed from his persistent desire to impose himself upon others. Whatever delighted him, he sought to inculcate upon his fellow Americans so that Rooseveltism and Americanism would be synonymous. Such a personal motive, when projected into public affairs, easily became transformed into the imperial impulse.¹⁹ From the beginning of his public career, he attempted to shape a new and more admirable type of public individual, one which was "well bred but strenuous, ambitious but public spirited, upright but practical and efficient..."²⁰ The alteration in the national psychology which Sherman credits largely to Theodore Roosevelt is viewed by that author as one of profound importance. It halted a nation for decadence and brought a renaissance to it instead. To the contention that the Colonel's greatest contribution and achievement was the Panama Canal, Sherman counters that it was his creation of an atmosphere for the nation in which there was greater valor, a higher seriousness by all the people, and an air more nearly free of the poisonous

¹⁸ Sherman, Americans, 271.

¹⁹ Hofstadter, Tradition, 211.

²⁰ Sherman, Americans, 274.

²¹ Sherman, Americans, 270.

emanations of "superior" people. His was a three-fold appeal to the more intelligent class of "ordinary" citizens: the straightforward statement of duty; the craftily constructed contemptuous phrase for the dilettante; and the quiet but significant reference to the rewards of virtue. It might be said that his theme was: "The path of duty is the way to glory." And the things he believed a man's duty to be, he preached "in season and out of season." He himself was a "powerful animal" who gloried constantly in the fundamental animal instincts and activities; and he was highly dedicated to the idea of the big family and the big stick, in the "full baby carriage," and in "hitting hard and hitting first." He expatiated on his patriotic beliefs to the degree that the blase young man of that day became an unfashionable creature.²¹

Roosevelt's words and deeds evidenced a devotion to the noble and virtuous things in life. Yet, being a self-styled "practical" man, he could not shy away from the necessary associations with the "high-low-brows" of politics. He broke bread with political bosses and men of great wealth. He had to. It was a necessary evil in his profession. But because he, as a public person, was so opinionated, so dogmatic and effusive in his views, and because his personality was so controversial, he could not escape becoming subjected to intense criticism from his adversaries. While there were many prominent contemporary

²¹ Sherman, Americans, 270.

authors who condemned him with great facility, probably none of the anti-Roosevelt school so ably expressed his convictions and bias as H. L. Mencken.

Mencken,²² a heavy-handed disciplinarian whose hard, pointed, forcible, and egotistic style was all he had in common with Theodore Roosevelt, wielded his mighty pen against the ex-President. He described the similarity between the Rooseveltian philosophy, as expressed in The Strenuous Life, and that of Friedrich Nietzsche--suggesting that the borrowings were numerous and inescapable, and he suggested that "Theodore had swallowed Friedrich as a farm-wife swallows Peruna--bottle, cork, label, and testimonials."²³

Roosevelt also was accused of having philosophical kinship to the German Kaiser.²⁴ Both were said to believe that all men who opposed them were prompted by the devil and

²² H. L. Mencken, whose journalistic endeavor had a tremendous influence on American thinking in the first quarter of the 20th century, was of German-born parents and of pure German ancestry. He was an individualist, champion of heterodoxy, an anarchist, arch-enemy of Puritanism, self-styled skeptic, anti-reformer, and crusader against Crusades. He is given credit for having a superb gift for communication; and, in his prime, he was characterized as a "highly sanative enzyme in the body politic." He was never an economic or political liberal. His career as author, journalist, and long-time staff writer for the Baltimore Sun gave every indication that he, like Roosevelt, enjoyed his prejudices. 20th Century Authors, edited by Stanley J. Kunitz and Howard Haycraft, (New York, 1942), 944.

²³ H. L. Mencken, A Mencken Chrestomathy (New York, 1949), 231.

²⁴ This accusation came particularly from the British. Roosevelt, being quite aware of this, chose to express his usual caustic opinion on such matters by writing to his friend Henry Cabot Lodge that "it always amuses me to find that the English think that I am under the influence of the Kaiser. The heavy-witted creatures

would suffer for their actions in hell. The difference between these two contemporaries was seen as lying in favor of Wilhelm II, for he, according to Mencken, was a milder and more modest man, who was more accustomed to circumstance and authority and hence less intoxicated by the greatness of his high estate.²⁵ Roosevelt could never be polite to an opponent, taking extravagant advantages, habitually hitting below the belt, and playing to the "worst idiocies of the mob." Definitely not of the formal school of duelists, and Roosevelt was compared to a "florified bouncer engaged eternally in cleaning out bar-rooms--and not too proud to gouge when the inspiration came to him, or to bite in the clinches, or to oppose the relatively fragile brass knuckles of the code with chair-legs, bung-starters, cuspidors,

do not understand that nothing would persuade me to follow the lead of or enter into close alliance with a man who is so jumpy, so little capable of continuity of action, and therefore, so little capable of being loyal to his friends or steadfastly hostile to an enemy.... I intend to do my best to keep on good terms with Germany, as with all other nations...; and I shall be friendly to the Kaiser as I am friendly to every one. But as for his having any special influence with me, the thought is absurd." Theodore Roosevelt Cyclopedia, 652. Extracted from a letter to Henry Cabot Lodge, May 15, 1905.

It is interesting to note that in a letter to Henry White, August 14, 1906, Roosevelt expressed an admiration, respect, and like for the Kaiser, despite the fact that he found "his personal attitude one of intense egoism." Theodore Roosevelt Cyclopedia, 652. It is significant that this came from a man who was described as having "fled from...introspection with a desperate urgency that is sometimes pitiable." Hofstadter, Tradition, 210.

²⁵ Mencken facetiously pointed out that the Kaiser also wrote much fewer letters. Chrestomathy, 232.

²⁷ "Mr. Roosevelt Resigns from the Editorial Staff of the Outlook," Outlook, CVII. (July 11, 1914), 570.

demijohns, and ice-picks."²⁶ Though prone to grave overstatement and exaggeration, Mencken was a keen observer of his era. The satire and excellent lexicology used in imparting his analysis of the Roosevelt personality served to make more delectable the "food for thought" which he gave to students of those times.

Characteristic of those who viewed Theodore Roosevelt in a more favorable light, Lyman Abbott of the Outlook stated that "the election of 1912 proved that the rank and file of that [the Republican] party understood and believed in" the Colonel. Abbott further maintained that the events of the five years prior to the opening of World War I increased "our faith in the righteousness and ultimate success of the principles of which [Roosevelt is] America's greatest interpreter."²⁷ In paying tribute to the memory of Theodore Roosevelt, the American Historical Review recalled that he conducted the affairs of the Presidency with a "chauvinistic gusto" that made his voice, despite some false notes, a "trumpet-call to his generation."²⁸

The Roosevelt character was not one of "delicate shadings." Instead, it revealed sharp contrasts which did not change with time, and it remained at his death as it was in his earliest years. As a legislator, Roosevelt had learned the technique of "shouting commonplace virtues with heroic emphasis," and "sweeping the other side of argument

²⁶ H. L. Mencken, A Mencken Chrestomathy, 232.

²⁷ "Mr. Roosevelt Resigns from the Editorial Staff of the Outlook," Outlook, CVII (July 11, 1914), 570.

²⁸ "Theodore Roosevelt," American Historical Review, XXIV

into the limbo corruption...." And though seemingly unprofessional, he had likewise learned that for him "the commission of political suicide was the safest of his sports." Roosevelt, one authority insisted, did not change his attitudes fundamentally in his later years, and did not change his virtues for his inconsistencies--all quite contrary to the Roosevelt critics.²⁹ Ambiguity was seen as coming "naturally and honestly" to him, for "the straddle was built like functional furniture into his thinking."³⁰ His adversaries more nearly would have agreed with the words of Stuart P. Sherman, however, maintaining that "by his violent and infallible emphasis he became the greatest concocter of 'weasel' paragraphs on record. In time his hearers learned to distinguish what he said from what he stood for, the part of his speech which was official rhetoric from the part that quivered with personal force." His impassioned messages were interpreted as revealing the whole emphasis of his character.³¹

The years following his Presidential terms are undoubtedly the most difficult ones of Roosevelt's life to appreciate. He was outside the responsibilities of office and was generally on the losing side, though it was often the right one. His enemies criticized him as an equivocal

²⁹ Frederic L. Paxson, review of Theodore Roosevelt and His Time by Joseph B. Bishop, American Historical Review, XXVI (April, 1921), 553.

³⁰ Hofstadter, Tradition, 228.

³¹ Sherman, Americans, 285.

self-seeker whose ambitions brought about his fight with Taft, his struggle to make something of the Progressive movement, and his contemptuous opposition to the Wilson Administration. Paxson, in alleging that the views of Roosevelt always remained the same, states that only the times and conditions changed. Substantially, this seemed to be true. It is obvious that his political friends and followers of one period became his enemies of another day, and vice versa. The evolution of events and the political desires of his contemporaries certainly seemed to determine their status as friends or enemies. "He was not always consistent in the application of his views, but the views were permanent, and he remained the most American leader of his generation."³²

While one student of the times described the Roosevelt character as having a "large kernel of compromise at its center,"³³ another, in a similar vein, declared that "men who knew him know that he accepted contradiction and correction every day." Roosevelt's writings however give very little corroboration for a statement that he accepted correction with any degree of willingness. Instead, his judgments were sweeping and inclusive, and he often made it sound as if only scoundrels could disagree with him.

His many prominent personal characteristics provided ideal

³² Frederic L. Paxson, review of Theodore Roosevelt and His Time by Joseph B. Bishop, American Historical Review, XXVI (April, 1921), 553.

³³ Mowry, Progressive Movement, 212.

subjects for the political cartoonists' busy pens. From these caricatures as well as from the many myths which surrounded him, Roosevelt is known to have derived considerable pleasure.³⁴ If these favorable insights into his controversial personality be true, they would seem to minimize, if not entirely debunk, the criticisms of demagoguery which were hurled at him. To one newspaperman of considerable repute who spent much time around the ex-President in his later years, he was a "tribal chieftain" and "one of the most versatile statesmen of our day."³⁵

The Spanish-American War brought Theodore Roosevelt to the forefront just as the War of 1812 did Andrew Jackson. This late century "incident" created a positive effect upon the American national character; and it is Theodore Roosevelt who was largely responsible for that development.³⁶ It is said that he made the deeds of the Rough Riders a "popular classic like Lexington and Bunker Hill." And "his little war did as much to kindle as Mr. Wilson's big war did to quench the military spirit; for Mr. Wilson went in with the grim determination of a chief of police, and Mr. Roosevelt with the infinite gusto of a big game hunter."³⁷ And, "his

³⁴ Frederic L. Paxson, a review of Theodore Roosevelt and His Time by Joseph B. Bishop, American Historical Review, XXVI (April, 1921), 553.

³⁵ Frederic L. Paxson, a review of Talks With Theodore Roosevelt by John J. Leary, Jr., American Historical Review, XXVI (October, 1920), 149.

³⁶ Sherman, Americans, 275.

³⁷ Ibid., 277.

little war", as Roosevelt often referred to America's conflict with the Spanish, made him the President of the United States.

Theodore Roosevelt's characteristics seemed to intensify with age.³⁸ Likewise, the Roosevelt trait of absolute self-trust hardened with the years. Unlike other historical figures who in their twilight years chose to reconstruct some of their previously-made statements, Roosevelt showed a willingness to avoid the opportunities afforded by hindsight and let the facts stand, so that posterity might decide for itself. "Let it stand," Roosevelt instructed his official biographer, "I am willing to have what I said go into the record unchanged...."³⁹ His assent to have his record held up for scrutiny appears as something of a rebuttal to those who accuse him of having made official decisions and of taking public positions on issues in the light of personal political aggrandizement.

The last epoch of his life, to be sure, was one of grave disappointment, and through his griefs he saw the drift of national events less truly than was his custom. The center of the stage had been his by right, and he was "too human not to resent being crowded from the stage on which he had played a gallant part."⁴⁰

³⁸ Ray Stannard Baker, The Life and Letters of Woodrow Wilson (6 vols., Garden City, N.Y., 1935-37), V, 198. This work hereafter cited as Baker, Wilson.

³⁹ Frederic L. Paxson, review of Theodore Roosevelt and His Time by Joseph B. Bishop, American Historical Review, XXVI (April, 1921), 552.

⁴⁰ Ibid., 554.

⁴¹ Shuman, Americans, 286-87.

Stuart P. Sherman reckoned:⁴¹

How much more glorious it might have been if in his great personality there had been planted a spark of magnanimity. If, after he had drunk of personal glory like a Scandinavian giant, he had lent his giant strength to a cause of the plain people not of his contriving nor under his leadership. If in addition to helping win the war he had identified himself with the attainment of its one grand popular object. From performing this supreme service he was prevented by defects of temper which he condemned in Cromwell, a hero whom he admired and in some respects strikingly resembled.

The American leader of militant imperialistic nationalism fell at the end of his last great fight, a fight which, it may be soberly said, he had done his utmost both immediately and remotely to prepare for and to bring about. All his friends and many who were not his friends give him credit for the immediate preparation. But few of his friends claim or admit his profounder part in the preparation of the stage for the conflict, the will of the combatants, the conditions of the struggle, the prizes of victory. The preparation runs far back to the days when he began to preach the strenuous life in the flush of the Spanish War, to the days when he dangled before our eyes 'those fair tropic islands,' to the days when he boasted that he had taken Panama and let Congress debate after the act. In the stunning clash of militant imperialistic nations, a clash which was the 'inevitable' goal of his life-long policy, as it is that of every imperialist, he towered above his fellow-citizens, constantly and heroically calling to arms. His countrymen rose, but not for his battle. They fought, but not for his victory. Time and events with remorseless irony made him the standard-bearer and rallying point for an American host dedicated to the destruction of his policy of militant imperialistic nationalism abroad and at home.

Highly as they valued his instrumental services, the principles on which his countrymen waged the war and the objects which they sought drew them away from Roosevelt and towards Lincoln and Washington.

⁴¹ Sherman, Americans, 286-87.

This was the character and personality of a man born into an upper middle class family of New York, a family which had no political background and had shunned any possibilities of being drawn into the public eye and public life--attributes expected of the "better" families in ante- and post-bellum days. This was the character of a man who was described as "second in interest only to Niagara Falls among American natural phenomena."⁴²

Youthful Theodore, though infirm, was dedicated to the customary habits of boys; and he revelled in his tasks of collecting species of such animals as mice, snakes, and birds. Typically, these creatures were found to inhabit his dresser drawers and other "safe" depositories, dead or alive and regardless of odor. Young "Teedie" showed early signs of erudition through his written observations of animal life; and his boyish efforts at taxidermy denoted a devotion to those things which held his interests.⁴³

Theodore Roosevelt was the second of four children; and in his childhood he indicated to most friends of the family only that he was an intelligent child with the normally bright future to be expected for most American boys. During his minority and prior to his entrance in college, Theodore had the opportunity and enlightenment of

⁴² Hofstadter, Tradition, 229.

⁴³ Henry F. Pringle, Theodore Roosevelt (New York, 1931), 3-15. This work hereafter cited as Pringle, Roosevelt.

European travel. At Harvard, he proved to be a somewhat insignificant member of the student body. Academically, he did well, but not brilliantly. He fell in love and became engaged. He proved to be rather abrupt with many of his professors; and his popularity rating with his fellow students was only mediocre. Perhaps of greater significance among his college experiences was his newly-found dedication to physical prowess. This one developed characteristic was destined to exert an all-powerful influence upon the character of this man henceforth to his end. Though the physical aspect of this trait was not translated into the political until a number of years later, it eventually came to pervade his most important thoughts, actions, and motives--in fact, his whole personality.⁴⁴

Roosevelt's determination to enter politics was not inspired by any concept of positive aims, but instead by a vague sense of dedication. "One can find little deliberate ideology in the early Roosevelt."⁴⁵ Negative impulses seemed to lie behind most of his political beliefs.⁴⁶ It was his obsession to "save" the masters of capital from their own stupid obstinacy.⁴⁷ Upon being elected to the New York State Legislature, another facet of the Rooseveltian

⁴⁴ Pringle, Roosevelt, 16-39.

⁴⁵ Hofstadter, Tradition, 216.

⁴⁶ Ibid., 230.

⁴⁷ Ibid., 218.

⁴⁸ Hofstadter, Tradition, 225.

individuality was unveiled. Without fanfare and with little publicity, Roosevelt "the reformer" was revealed to the local political arena. While he was never to belong to the wild-haired radical school, his more conservative concepts of reform were to permeate his every political campaign and position. He considered himself as one who represented a golden mean. Reform in his mind did not mean a "thorough-going purgation".⁴⁸ Instead, it was meant to "heal only the most conspicuous sores on the body politic." His emphasis on his philosophy of reform and on the virtues of physical battle were to constitute the cornerstone of his guady political career. Throughout his succeeding public posts--as U.S. Civil Service Commissioner, New York Police Commissioner, Assistant Navy Secretary, Governor of New York, as President of the United States, and as ex-President, Theodore Roosevelt used these two attributes as leavening qualities. As he fought and struggled through the political battles of these various high offices, he became more strongly imbued with these dominant characteristics. With him they were omnipresent, internally and unconsciously as well as outwardly, consciously, and public.

Theodore Roosevelt had a certain breadth and cultivation that are usually considered rare among early 20th century politicians. During his presidency, he displayed a superb technique for drawing popular excitement and irritation into channels of moderate action. His exuberance

⁴⁸ Hofstadter, Tradition, 225.

and versatility while in that high office brought at least a partial restoration of consciousness that other ends exist which make life worth living besides power and wealth. Roosevelt considered himself a moralist, one who was fighting for the real need in American public life--morality. He spoke the views of the middle classes of all parts of the country, and he was considered to be the "master therapist" of those peoples.⁴⁹ It is characteristic, however, that many people, even some of his best friends, refused to take him altogether seriously as a person. Elihu Root is quoted as saying: "I have no doubt he thinks he believes what he says, but he doesn't."⁵⁰ Theodore Roosevelt was hardened and trained by a long fight with his own insecurity. From this came his egoism, his little-known facets of introspection and despondency, and his attacks of anxiety. Taft could reach no other conclusion than that his former friend had joined the Administration's political enemies--those enemies consisting largely of members of the progressive wing of the Republican Party who had been finding themselves at odds with the conservatives, especially since 1908.

To 1912, the struggle between progressive and conservative Republicanism was very real, and Taft and Roosevelt represented the opposite poles of opinion. The Progressives in the House and Senate of the 62nd Congress established

⁴⁹ Hofstadter, Tradition, 231.

⁵⁰ Ibid., 233.

CHAPTER II UP THE RIVER OF DOUBT

While there undoubtedly are many theories as to the origin of the Progressive Party, there can be little doubt that it had as a birthplace the political split between President William Howard Taft and ex-President Theodore Roosevelt in 1910. Chagrined because Roosevelt would not give his administration a public endorsement, Taft cooled toward his kingmaker. Roosevelt, showing obvious disappointment at various shortcomings of his successor, refused to endorse Taft because he felt it would be gross insincerity. This stand on the part of the returned big game hunter was interpreted as unfriendliness, and it gave the President just cause for suspicion of Roosevelt's designs. Taft could reach no other conclusion than that his former friend had joined the Administration's political enemies --those enemies consisting largely of members of the progressive wing of the Republican Party who had been finding themselves at odds with the conservatives, especially since 1908.

To 1912, the struggle between progressive and conservative Republicanism was very real, and Taft and Roosevelt represented the opposite poles of opinion. The Progressives in the House and Senate of the 62nd Congress established themselves as a separate minority within the Republican Party, and they succeeded in maintaining a balance of power in both houses. Senator Robert LaFollette of Wisconsin

led a group of progressives to form the National Progressive Republican League. The ostensible purpose of this organization was to advocate progressive principles; however, its fundamental purpose for existence was to insure the defeat of Taft for renomination in 1912.¹

The National Progressive Republican League was soon recognized as a very potent nominating machine, and it was not too surprising that it quickly became the instrument which promoted the candidacy of Senator LaFollette. There was one serious defect from which the League suffered, however. Despite all its worthy attributes, it did not have the support of Theodore Roosevelt. Mowry believes that this non-support stemmed from Roosevelt's hope that Taft would receive the 1912 nomination. With an obvious schism in the party, and a certain Taft defeat at the polls, Roosevelt saw that it could be he who would be called upon to reorganize and reunite the party. Hence, to endorse the League would destroy his bipartisan position in the intra-party feud.² On the other hand, Roosevelt did not openly repudiate the League and he remained cordial to it and came to support some of its principles.³

Upon the occasion of Roosevelt's sixteen-state tour of the country in 1910, the old public enthusiasm for the Colonel revived. He expressed his views on the more important questions of the day and expounded his somewhat

¹ Mowry, Progressive Movement, 171.

² Ibid., 174.

³ Ibid., 177.

new economic theories. His utterances revealed to his followers a growing radicalism, causing observers to refer to him as the John Brown of the Republican insurgents. Try as he did in the ensuing months, he could not entirely remove himself from this position.⁴ Roosevelt's climactic speech came at Osawatomie, Kansas, and it was hailed with great rejoicing by all progressives in the trans-Mississippi West. Such overwhelming support came to him spontaneously for his stand on various issues that the "Theodore Roosevelt for 1912" boom was born.⁵

At first, the ex-President maintained silence on the subject of 1912. But the response to his cross-country tour, and to articles which he had written for the Outlook, persuaded him to permit his friends to send up trial balloons to determine the potency of his political radiation. It was not long before he no longer asked his colleagues to cease political activity in his behalf, as he had done all along. Instead, he invited them to Oyster Bay. Soon his eagerness to enter the forthcoming presidential race became a matter of public recognition. The decision was made; and the battle was on.

The question is often presented as to why Roosevelt chose to jump into the uncertainty of 1912 when, with a defeated Taft, he could surely capture the Republican nomination in 1916 with relative ease. The answer to this seems

⁴ Roosevelt, Letters, VII, 108n.

⁵ Mowry, Progressive Movement, 147.

to lie in his complete irritation with Taft, his recently regained self-confidence, his sincere desire to see his reforms implemented, his view of a Democratic victory as a minor national tragedy, and his inability to refuse the call of his friends who needed his name to add strength to local Republican tickets.⁶ By convention time, despite the aid he received, from a few individuals of big business such as George W. Perkins, Roosevelt had lost the support of the nation's monied interests, because of his adverse stand on issues which affected them. Likewise, he had drawn the dislike of the supporters of LaFollette, who accused him of treachery toward the Senator. These, plus the all-important fact that Taft controlled the Republican National Committee and hence the machinery of the convention, proved an insurmountable roadblock to the Rough Rider in his aspirations for the Republican nomination. That thirteen state primaries showed Roosevelt to have had a strength greater than Taft and LaFollette combined was to mean little in the convention's political manipulations.⁷ The "most momentous struggle since the close of the Civil War" came to a climax on June 18, 1912.⁸ The Republican National Convention which convened on that date opened what was possibly the greatest political imbroglio

⁶ Mowry, Progressive Movement, 195.

⁷ Ibid., 236. Roosevelt, 563.

⁸ Roosevelt's term for his fight against Taft.

¹¹ Mowry, Progressive Movement, 248.

in American history. It was a fight, said Roosevelt, of "honesty against dishonesty," charging that President Taft had surrendered to "the machine" and that Taft delegates had been dishonestly seated by the National Committee, although the Roosevelt forces had "a large majority of the legally elected members of the convention."⁹ Despite the inevitable defeat which faced his forces there in Chicago, Roosevelt rose to the occasion with a dramatic statement that "the victory shall be ours...by clean and honest fighting for the loftiest of causes...; with unflinching hearts and undimmed eyes, we stand at Armageddon, and we battle for the Lord."¹⁰

The Colonel had come to the convention city convinced that he was the choice of the majority of Republicans and with the decision made that he would lead a bolting faction out of the party if the Taft forces overwhelmed him.¹¹ From the vote for temporary chairman, which his forces lost by 558 to 502, to the first roll call vote for nominations, which gave Taft 561 and Roosevelt 107, everything indicated the impossibility of the Colonel's nomination. The final straw, the action which was to result in the election of Woodrow Wilson, came on the second day of the convention when the Credentials Committee affirmed the preconvention decision of the National Committee to seat the contested Taft delegates. Though there was a slim

⁹ Pringle, Roosevelt, 563.

¹⁰ Ibid., 564.

¹¹ Mowry, Progressive Movement, 248.

possibility that these decisions could be reversed on the convention floor, Roosevelt told his excited followers that "so far as I am concerned I am through. If you are voted down [in the convention] the real and lawful majority will organize as such.... I went before the people and I won.... Let us find out whether the Republican Party is the party of the plain people...or the party of the bosses...acting in the interests of special privilege."¹²

The inevitable did happen. The Roosevelt forces lost their fight on the floor, and some 451 delegates made their exit from the convention. But this departure did not occur without the proper adieus. In what journalist William Allen White described as a "masterpiece of amiable sarcasm," Henry J. Allen of Kansas stood before the barbed wire protected¹³ chairman, Elihu Root, and in "ironic diatribe" bade a "tearless farewell" to the Taft majority. Thereupon the Roosevelt delegates, said White, marched out of the building with "as much dignity as men of wrath can assume in defeat."¹⁴

The ensuing gathering of the disgruntled at Orchestra Hall pledged their enthusiastic support to the Colonel

¹² Pringle, Roosevelt, 565.

¹³ After the Republican convention had adjourned, it was discovered that the bunting surrounding the platform had served the dual purpose also of camouflaging interwoven strands of barbed wire.

¹⁴ William Allen White, Autobiography (New York, 1946), 472, 483. This work hereafter cited as White, Autobiography.

in whatever way was considered best to right the wrong which had been done them. And in his characteristic manner, Roosevelt replied: "If you wish me to make the fight, I will make it, even if only one State should support me."¹⁵ This enthusiasm was translated into action on August 5, 1912, when the Bull Moose Convention of the new-born Progressive Party got under way. It was described as a "novel political gathering," opening with boundless human spirit. The initial oratory by Senator Albert J. Beveridge of Indiana and the 20,000-word "Confession of Faith" address by Theodore Roosevelt succeeded in working the throng of delegates into a state of near delirium.¹⁶ And to the accompaniment of such hymns as "Onward Christian Soldiers" and "Praise God From Whom All Blessings Flow," the colorful Colonel was duly nominated as the party's presidential nominee.¹⁷

The convention of "rather more than mildly mad"¹⁸ delegates was adjourned; and a bitter three-sided campaign was about to begin--the results of which were to haunt Roosevelt for the remainder of his days. The exponent of the "New Nationalism" launched his crusade, and while he never seemed to entertain much hope of victory, he felt that he was adhering to his moral duty.¹⁹ His journeys

¹⁵ Pringle, Roosevelt, 565.

¹⁶ Ibid., 566.

¹⁷ White, Autobiography, 484.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ George E. Mowry views the New Nationalism as having doctrines pointed in a different direction from that

through the country were described as "triumphal as a Roman warrior's," for he still had the power to attract the multitudes. He gained many followers because they admired his apparent abandonment of opportunism and his complete devotion to his cause.²⁰ While his critics, on the other hand, wrongly accused Roosevelt of opportunistic actions, almost without exception where there is evidence to support such an accusation, it can be countered with proof that he disregarded his own political welfare and stature in order to fight for what he considered right.²¹ This ignominious campaign as carried on by all sides saw the Colonel pull out all the stops, even turning an attempted assassination into political capital. In his letter to Henry J. White,

Roosevelt The day of decision in November, 1912, revealed that the old Rough Rider had aided a man defeat President

of traditional American progressivism. Mowry, Progressive Movement, 147. The New Nationalism was described as combining Hamiltonian means with Jeffersonian ends, and as being only a step away from the more recent New Deal. Ibid., 145. In following the theories of his new program, Roosevelt had given the Progressive Convention a speech recommending unprecedented changes, which was described editorially as a "manifesto of revolution," a program of wild and dangerous changes. Ibid., 265.

²⁰ Ibid., 275. Be his program New Nationalism or progressive, he was most dedicated to its principles. Otherwise, questions Mowry, how could he have so boldly advocated reforms in big business in his Columbus speech prior to the conventions which he knew would alienate a considerable segment of the Republican Party and hence greatly reduce his chances for that party's nomination. Mowry, Progressive Movement, 255.

²¹ e.g. his stand on rearmament and hyphenated Americanism, both vote-losing propositions.

Taft who would thereafter be a nemesis to him at every turn. Although expecting defeat, Roosevelt dejectedly asserted: "The American people will cheer for me but they will not vote for me."²² It was said that "Armageddon had been fought, but the Lord had forgotten." Nevertheless, in his happier moments he was gratified at his showing in the election--as a third party candidate he had run second in the field of three and had proved a definite superiority to Taft.²³ "It was a phenomenal thing," he exclaimed, "to be able to bring the new party into second place and to beat out the Republicans. The Democrats nominated their strongest man and yet we reduced his vote to less than that of Bryan four years ago." In his letter to Henry J. White, Roosevelt's further observation is significant in that he expressed belief that if Wilson "behaved himself," the Democrats would continue in power for some time.²⁴ The outcome of the 1912 presidential election was indeed a personal achievement for Colonel Roosevelt. It was more than creditable that he could have drawn such wide support without the aid of either major party's organization, and the results constituted an "enduring testament" to his personal popularity.²⁵ Roosevelt's "moral" victory,

²² Isaac F. Marcossan, Adventures in Interviewing, 89.

²³ Mowry, Progressive Movement, 281.

²⁴ Roosevelt, Letters, VIII, 639. Roosevelt to Henry J. White, November 12, 1912.

²⁵ Mowry, Progressive Movement, 281.

however, did not carry down through the lesser offices. Few of the minor Progressive candidates had won offices. Recognizing the importance of having a working group of state and county level officeholders, Roosevelt saw a bleak future for his new party. Hence, it was apparent to him that the Progressives could not fail to lose further ground in the mid-term elections of 1914. Though the picture was discouraging, he saw that it was vital to the whole progressive movement to continue the Progressive Party and build its strength. Inasmuch as he had lured so many of the new party's leaders out of the Republican ranks just at a time when they had threatened to control it, leading these men into a blind alley would cause any future possibility of Republican progressivism to perish.²⁶

From the vantage point of 1912, the future of the Progressive Party was definitely clouded. At that stage of its development, its fate is said to have lain "in the lap of time and in the strong but nervous hands of Theodore Roosevelt."²⁷ And this man with "nervous hands" was having antipodal thoughts. While on the one hand he was full convinced of the need to continue the work of the progressives; yet, on the other, he came to be leery of the "divine mission" of the Progressive Party.²⁸ But whatever thoughts he might have entertained of leaving his new party for

²⁶ Mowry, Progressive Movement, 282.

²⁷ Ibid., 283.

²⁸ White, Autobiography, 503.

greener pastures, he saw that he could not afford so quickly to dash the hopes of millions of his followers who had left the Republican Party at his call. He was the one who had led them into the struggle; now it was his obligation to lead them further--at least for a little while.²⁹

Though struggling with these opposing emotions, the ex-President recognized that the Democrats might eliminate the necessity of his making a decision. It was true that if the Democrats, now going into power in Washington, under Wilson, made good on their progressive promises, the Progressive Party per se was through. The only factor that could prevent this obliteration was the possibility that the heterogeneous Democratic Party would split wide open, thus leaving the now rather ineffectual Progressives as a group to be reckoned with. Especially if President Wilson should happen to align himself with the reactionary elements of his party, the Democrats, in the eyes of the populace, could be put in the same fold as the Republicans; thence the Progressives would be the organization to speak the strong voice of progressivism.³⁰ Of the other two powerful voices of progressive principles, LaFollette and Wilson, Roosevelt saw that he was in most direct competition with the latter;³¹ and the question was: Would Wilson steal the Roosevelt progressive thunder? He did; and President

²⁹ Mowry, Progressive Movement, 284. Idaho, and Norris

³⁰ Ibid., 286.

³¹ Mowry, Progressive Movement, 257.
 Pringle, Roosevelt, 545.

Wilson's remarkable record of reform without question had a strong bearing upon the bitter enmity which was to develop between these two political leaders. Republican convention. The aski Severe disappointment fell upon Colonel Roosevelt in the two years following the 1912 political struggle. as It was enough that many of the prominent insurgent progressive Republicans had failed to desert the old party when it became clear that the Progressive Party was to be a permanent organization.³² But to climax this political timidity, Roosevelt lost most of his principal followers who had joined the ranks of the Progressives in 1912--including six of the seven governors and most of the progressive Republican nucleus of the Senate. These were the men largely responsible for persuading the Colonel to lead the bolt, and their actions made the Bull Moose furious. He credited them with nothing but "mere sound and fury."³³ As could thus be expected, from 1912 to 1914 there was an evident departure from the Progressive columns of great numbers of its lesser lights. What was described as a "retreat at full gallop from Armageddon" continued until the autumn of 1914. And many of those who did not desert, preached amalgamation with the Republicans. In terms of his continuing to be the leader of the party, such a union was contrary to the purposes of Theodore Roosevelt. As

³² e.g. Hadley of Missouri, Borah of Idaho, and Norris of Oregon. New York, 1920), II, 355. This work

³³ hereafter cited as Bishop, Roosevelt.
Mowry, Progressive Movement, 257.

early as these pre-war months, well over two years before the next presidential election, he was pondering his potential bargaining power at the next Republican convention. The asking price at that conclave might range quite high, if only he and other prominent Progressive leaders such as Hiram Johnson, Miles Poindexter, Albert J. Beveridge, and Gifford Pinchot could command even three million votes.³⁴

The several months following the election of 1912 undoubtedly brought significant influences upon Theodore Roosevelt which were to sway him in his thoughts and actions regarding future affairs. He had had time to think, and such thinking could at times lead him into deep despondency if he were not provided with an outlet. But there was no outlet at hand adequate for his furious energies. He seemed to view himself as being "over the hill" with his day as a great leader past. He declined to make speeches on political subjects or to accept any leadership in party matters because he believed that to do so would be only "mischievous and not useful."³⁵

It was little wonder then that in late 1913 the hero of San Juan Hill chose to take an expedition--an expedition into the interior of South America and up the Duvida, The River of Doubt.

³⁴ Mowry, Progressive Movement, 291.

³⁵ Joseph B. Bishop, Theodore Roosevelt and His Time (2 vols., New York, 1920), II, 355. This work hereafter cited as Bishop, Roosevelt.

Gifford Upon Roosevelt's return to the United States in May of the following year, it was not unexpected that he should succumb, after an appropriate period of temptation, to an unconditional surrender to politics.³⁶ But the man who returned from the jungles and the alligators had assumed the role of practical politician. The emotional idealist of 1912 had vanished, and surprisingly he was remaining mute on such subjects as the Progressive Party, a third party candidacy in 1916, and his unknown movement toward closer association with "regular" Republican thinking.³⁷

Despite his long absence and lack of home contact, Roosevelt was still the hero of the Progressives. They were convinced that he, morally and orally, was committed to lead them in 1914 and 1916.³⁸ He was soon being urgently requested to get into the fall campaigns. Physically tired as a result of his rigorous experiences in South America, he undoubtedly was somewhat lacking in political spirit. But great pressure was brought to bear upon him to help out at least in certain key races. Two of the most important contests to the Progressives were those involving

³⁶ Pringle, Roosevelt, 574.

³⁷ Ibid., 575.

³⁸ Harold L. Ickes, "Who Killed the Progressive Party?" American Historical Review, XLVI (January, 1941), 308. Hereafter cited as Ickes, "Progressive Party." A statement which Roosevelt made at a New York dinner before leaving for Brazil was the primary basis for this Progressive assumption. On this occasion, the Colonel pledged to fight to the end for the Progressives.

Gifford Pinchot in Pennsylvania and Raymond Robins in Illinois, both running for the United States Senate. Though he appeared quite reluctant to actively engage in the political campaign, he nevertheless committed himself to speech-making, particularly in behalf of Pinchot and Robins. Once enticed into the political arena, his enthusiasm grew and his old vigor seemed to return. The results, however, were not encouraging. Despite Roosevelt's great popularity in both Pennsylvania and Illinois, and notwithstanding the very forceful campaigning done by both Pinchot and Robins, these two very able Progressives were defeated. It was as evident in 1914 as it had been two years earlier that the celebrated Theodore Roosevelt could not translate his popularity into votes for other men.³⁹

The pressure which the Progressives brought to bear in getting the Colonel back into political action had been typically effective in stirring him to respond to a call to arms. Though having been back in the country only five weeks, Roosevelt in late June announced that he was resigning from the Outlook staff for political reasons. The developments over the past three or four years made it necessary, he asserted, to take a more active part in promoting throughout the country the principles of the Progressive Party. He was especially concerned over certain social and industrial evils, the abatement of which the Wilson

³⁹ Ickes, "Progressive Party," 310. Roosevelt to Lyman Abbott, June 29, 1914.

Administration seemed to have abandoned. Further, he was honor bound, he said, to stand in strong opposition to the Administration because it had stood for the "abandonment of the interest and honor of America" in international relations. Wilson's failure in matters of domestic economics likewise was a point on which he intended to launch an attack.⁴⁰

Such an act on the part of the Administration was sure to Although such matters as Progressive principles, international relations, and the domestic economy were ostensibly of high importance to the Roosevelt mind, as a composite it is doubtful if they were nearly as responsible in bringing his Outlook resignation and his re-entry into politics as the treaty with Colombia. Secretary of State Bryan, the Colonel's old adversary, had negotiated a treaty with this South American country which was tantamount to an apology on the part of the United States for her part in the Panama revolution. The treaty provided for the payment of an indemnity of twenty-five million dollars. Of all things that enraged Theodore Roosevelt against Woodrow Wilson, surely there was none that created greater vehemence on the part of the ex-President than this. To charge that his actions in Panama had not been honorable threw him into a white heat. This one factor, according to Mowry, became the major ingredient in Roosevelt's hate for Wilson, and it became a major influence in motivating him

⁴¹ Mowry, Progressive Movement, 308.

⁴⁰ Roosevelt, Letters, VII, 768. Roosevelt to Lyman Abbott, June 29, 1914.

⁴³ Ibid., 287.

to take some of his future stands against the Administration. In fact, the chagrin and self-righteousness which he felt over this Colombia affair is believed to be largely responsible for Roosevelt's actions in 1916, when he hesitates at nothing in trying to defeat Wilson.⁴¹ This Bryan treaty was certainly timed well, as far as the Progressives were concerned. Such an act on the part of the Administration was sure to bring a sulphurous attack from the Colonel, and it would not only spur him into more vigorous political activity but would also give him an important campaign topic for the fall battles.⁴²

If the Administration seemed to be playing into the hands of the Progressives, certainly the aid must have been appreciated, for all was not well within the Progressive camp. In Congress they had lost whatever effectiveness and power their small group had been able to exercise. Instead of remaining united against their adversaries, the Progressives on Capitol Hill had become a group torn by internal dissention and had been divided against itself on most every piece of major legislation.⁴³ Within their party organization as well, all had not gone smoothly. Controversy had arisen between the Progressive Party leader, George W. Perkins, and Amos Pinchot, brother of Gifford. The latter had implied that Roosevelt had given his complete approval

⁴¹ Mowry, Progressive Movement, 308.

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Ibid., 287. Letters, VII, 796. Roosevelt to Raymond Hobbs, Aug. 12, 1914.

to the questionable machinations of Perkins and hence was directly responsible for the pitiable condition of the party. So bitter did the Colonel become at his old friend Amos Pinchot that he broke off their friendship by writing him that "when I spoke of the Progressive party as having a lunatic fringe, I specifically had you in mind."⁴⁴ These internal squabbles caused a loss of trust by many Progressives in their leaders, including Theodore Roosevelt. Assuredly, this public airing of the party's dirty linen could have nothing but an adverse effect on its chances in November.⁴⁵

So distraught was the Colonel over the problems of the steadily declining Progressive Party that he left for a rather brief trip to Spain in June, 1914, without even so much as leaving a message of cheer to his fellow party leaders. This seemed a bit unusual in view of the critical problems which they faced to the November elections. This act by Roosevelt was surely an indication of his thinking regarding the future prospects of the Progressives.⁴⁶ Upon his return, he confided to his intimate friends that "we must... amalgamate or fuse with some body of men. Permanently there is only room for two national parties in this country."⁴⁷ This opinion was not to be expressed, however,

⁴⁴ Roosevelt, Letters, VIII, 1122.

⁴⁵ Mowry, Progressive Movement, 299. 1914, as reported by Mowry, Progressive Movement, 300.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Roosevelt, Letters, VII, 796. Roosevelt to Raymond Robins, Aug. 12, 1914.

to his Progressive followers until after the election. Until then he expounded on his wholehearted allegiance to the party, even predicting victory in November for Progressive candidates.⁴⁸ In his summer and fall campaign speeches, Theodore Roosevelt's expressions took on a new tone. This was in contradiction with other Progressives who expected to pickle up where they had left off in the 1912 crusade. Instead of the loud call for reform, Roosevelt, especially at Pittsburgh, spoke of prosperity and protection, and it was Dem- obvious that he leveled his criticism only at the Democrats,⁵² seldom mentioning the Republicans or his New Nationalism. The New York Times editorially stated that Roosevelt, without specifically recommending such, was cleverly moving the Progressives and himself toward a reunion with the Republican Party in 1916.⁴⁹ His developing sympathies for "regular" Republicanism, which had previously been concealed, were now coming to light. Through his speeches he was moving back into the good graces of the business interests. This could only be interpreted as a move in the right direction for the Colonel insofar as his 1916 Republican nomination aspirations were concerned.⁵⁰ It is superfluous to say that such staunch Progressive leaders as Hiram Johnson, William Allen White,

⁴⁸ the closing hours of his efforts, he declared to a Mowry, Progressive Movement, 300.

⁴⁹ From the New York Times of July 1, 1914, as reported by Mowry, Progressive Movement, 300.

⁵⁰ Ibid., Wilson, V, 94.

⁵³ Icke, "Progressive Party," 310.

John Parker, and Albert J. Beveridge, who wished to see the party continue as a permanent and separate organization, were dismayed. They saw in Roosevelt's contrivings a retreat from the party's doctrines and an indication that their leader who had led them to Armageddon might now be preparing to desert them.⁵¹

The new war in Europe played a relatively minor role in the 1914 Congressional campaigns. While Roosevelt struck at the Democrats, especially on domestic issues, the Democrats harnessed their efforts to give the President a Democratic Congress in view of the worsening European situation.⁵² The "desultory, half-hearted" campaign waged by the Progressives failed of its purpose--the re-election of the successful Progressive representatives of 1912, and the addition of a sizeable bloc in the House in order to give their party greater prestige and a more prominent position in 1916.⁵³

The end of the 1914 campaign found Theodore Roosevelt extremely tired (which was primarily a result of his jungle exploits) and very disgusted with the ranklings of the Party elements of the Progressive Party. He had spoken almost daily from August to November to rather small crowds. He had seen the handwriting on the wall, and confidentially expressed his relief at "finishing a hopeless campaign."

In the closing hours of his efforts, he declared to a

⁵¹ Mowry, Progressive Movement, 302. Quoted from a Roosevelt letter to G. K. Davis.
From the New York Times of July 1, 1914, as reported by Mowry, Progressive Movement, 301.

⁵² Baker, Wilson, V, 94.

⁵³ Ickes, "Progressive Party," 310.

friend that he had paid all his political debts and would soon be out of politics for good. "I have done everything this fall that everybody has wanted," he asserted. "This election makes me an absolutely free man. Thereafter I am going to say and do just what I damned please."⁵⁴ To an editorial which remarked that Roosevelt's party had "relapsed into innocuous desuetude," the old Colonel concurred by asserting that he was now "a private citizen of the privatest sort."⁵⁵

True, the Roosevelt revolt seemed to be over. The Progressives had staged a listless campaign, their ablest candidates had fallen to defeat, and, to rub salt into the wounds of Roosevelt, most of the G.O.P. Old Guard whom he had been responsible for defeating in 1912 were returned victoriously to Congress. Furthermore, instead of drawing up to four million votes, as was hoped, the Progressives received less than two million; fewer Progressives were returned to the Senate, and only one returned to the House. What more proof was needed to show that the Progressive Party had disintegrated.⁵⁶

Though the November "cataclysm" was about what Roosevelt had expected, this knowledge did little to soften the reality of defeat when it came. In the gloom of total

⁵⁴ Mowry, Progressive Movement, 302. Quoted from a Roosevelt letter to O. K. Davis.

⁵⁵ Roosevelt, Letters, VIII, 832n.

⁵⁶ Mowry, Progressive Movement, 303.

defeat, the Colonel momentarily lost his political touch. Always capable of analyzing his political stature, he saw that he should retire once and for all from politics. He suggested in a letter to his son Archie that the Progressive Party "now would probably disband."⁵⁷ Ex-President Taft, feeling in a vindictive mood, wrote his former Secretary of State, Philander C. Knox, "I hope the late election satisfied your desires. I am able to endure it with Christian resignation."⁵⁸

Theodore Roosevelt saw that the reform movement which had spread throughout the country in the previous twelve years was now subsiding through pressure from a conservative reaction. The people, he felt, were tired of reform, and no longer cared for political "fair play and decency."⁵⁹ Furthermore, the Bull Moose party, which was founded upon a "demand for distributive justice, using the government as an agency of human welfare," had lost its cause. Prosperity from war contracts and profits was cheering up the farmers and the workers.⁶⁰

It was obvious to Roosevelt what was happening; and for the party faithful to continue to push the Progressive Party cause seemed to him like "spurring a dead horse."⁶¹

His views on national trends and party policies as well as

⁵⁷ Mowry, Progressive Movement, 304.

⁵⁸ Ibid., 303. biography, 513.

⁵⁹ Ibid., 305. gressive Party, 311.

⁶⁰ White, Autobiography, 512.

⁶¹ Ibid., 513.

his general attitude sorely disheartened his followers who now felt uncertain and unhappy. Many more continued to desert the party, but those who remained were as dedicated as ever to the cause and were doggedly determined to struggle to the end.⁶²

Strange as it may seem, a short time after the election, when Roosevelt's dejection had eased somewhat, he came to the conclusion that the party must be held together.⁶³ The opinions which he formulated in this immediate post-election period were to color and partially explain his political course for the future, especially to 1916. He hoped that the Progressive organization could be perpetuated at least until the next presidential election, at which time the ability to deliver even two million votes could demand a high price in the case of a close race. As for progressivism itself, Roosevelt, who had often been accused of having only a perfunctory interest in it, now had even less concern for the principles of reform. It was rather suddenly noted that he no longer had a burning interest in social and industrial justice.⁶⁴

Here was the turn of Theodore Roosevelt's emphasis from progressivism to war.⁶⁵ The conflagration in Europe

⁶² Ickes, "Progressive Party," 311.

⁶³ Mowry, Progressive Movement, 305.

⁶⁴ White, Autobiography, 513.

⁶⁵ Ickes, "Progressive Party," 311.

⁷⁰ White, Autobiography, 507.

had come to engage his talents.⁶⁶ For the duration there would be no more ringing declarations or call to arms over progressive principles.⁶⁷ And many Progressives "heard Roosevelt's war drums with distaste and uneasiness...."⁶⁸ Within short order the man whom Ray Stannard Baker described in August as making speeches with more balance of than ever and who seemed more "retiring"⁶⁹ was soon to do a sharp reversal. As the Colonel's attentions were diverted from domestic justice to international barbarity, he focused his attacks on President Wilson and his administration's policies toward the war. On the subjects of neutrality, preparedness, and international morality and decency, he began to rant and preach. The more he raged, the more he forgot about the Bull Moosers--now "orphans in a storm." In his tirades at the President, Roosevelt alienated many of his Progressive Party supporters--people who agreed with the Wilson policy.⁷⁰ Though Roosevelt at first did not advocate American participation in the war, he clamored for preparedness, of criticizing the President for not adopting a policy of rearmament and for his attitude on foreign policy. During

⁶⁶ White, Autobiography, 513.

⁶⁷ Ickes, "Progressive Party," 311.

⁶⁸ White, Autobiography, 513.

⁶⁹ Baker, Wilson, V, 198. Baker visited Sagamore Hill, August 14, 1914.

⁷⁰ White, Autobiography, 507.

the entire year of 1915, the Colonel led the agitation against the Administration, hammering away on the need to train and arm men against the time when we should inevitably enter the war.⁷¹ While he felt that eventually America would become a participant, throughout the course of his preparedness campaign he preached on the theme of arming to prevent war.

As the months passed between the political wars of 1914 and 1916, Theodore Roosevelt drifted farther from the heart of his party. Little by little, he was leaving the organization which he had been responsible for founding. If those Progressives who in 1916 expressed such bitterness at the Colonel for not accepting their nomination had only followed the trend of his speeches and his articles, as well as any of his correspondence which might have been available to the public, they would have recognized that his refusal for the most part had been indelibly determined long before convention time.

There were many factors involved in the parting of the man and the party, the multiplicity of which perhaps was not seen by the ex-President's contemporaries. As one whose interest had shifted from domestic to international issues and as one who was taking a positive stand on the issues of rearmament and preparedness, he was certain to come in conflict with the great body of Progressives. It is traditional that people who are dedicated to working

⁷¹ White, Autobiography, 507.

⁷² Progressive Movement, 320.

for social reform are not at the same time inclined to find much interest in international issues--especially war. They tend to be pacifist in nature. Therefore, it is not surprising that from the ranks of Roosevelt's Progressives came some of the most militant opposition to American involvement in European affairs and to the Colonel's views thereon.

"Humanitarianism and war's barbarism are at antipodal poles of social action," states Mowry, because a spirit of militarism within a country will retard its social progress.⁷²

Because Americans of German blood, who were concerned with Germany's fate, saw there was little possibility of our becoming allied with the Fatherland, it was only natural that large elements of these people became associated with the Progressive Party--a party whose purpose it was to keep the country out of the war. They, of course, preferred to see the United States remain neutral rather than align itself with the Allies. Theodore Roosevelt held nothing but contempt for these German-Americans. These "hyphenated Americans," as he called them, were people who did not feel sufficiently assimilated and rededicated to drop the "German" and the hyphen before their "American" title. It was impossible to expect the Colonel to have any affinity for an organization so heavily populated with "hyphenates" as was the Progressives! Even the old cliché concerning the political bed-fellows was not broad enough to cover both the German-Americans and one so vitriolic toward them as Roosevelt.

⁷² Mowry, Progressive Movement, 321.

⁷² Mowry, Progressive Movement, 320.

Inasmuch as he and his party developed conflicting positions on matters of war, which led to Roosevelt's gradual withdrawal from the inner circle of the reformers, it was only natural that a person of such political energies would assume a new channel as an outlet. Slowly and no doubt deliberately, the ex-President moved toward his mother party. Because of his enthusiasm for preparedness, it was to be expected that he would lean toward that segment of the population which endorsed such a policy. This segment happened to be the conservatives, Republicans for the most part.⁷³ They were the force which was promoting the various patriotic organizations throughout the United States, organizations which the Colonel so heartily endorsed. The people who made up the conservative and patriotic forces happened to include, among others, industrialists, financiers, and businessmen in general. Roosevelt's growing association with these organizations and individuals seemed only to intensify his disgust with the Progressives. Adding to his chagrin was his awareness of the growing strength of the anti-war element in the Progressive Party and the knowledge that two of the leading Progressive newspapers on the West Coast had come out against preparedness.⁷⁴ The influence of Senator Lodge also had its usual positive effect in guiding the Colonel. Lodge had written Roosevelt that "the worst crowd we have to deal with are the so-called Progressive Senators. Almost all of them are for the embargo--I

⁷³ Mowry, Progressive Movement, 321.

⁷⁴ Roosevelt, Letters, VIII, 1013.

think all. They are not the supporters of preparedness; and we can hardly count on them for anything."⁷⁵

That large sections of what remained of the Progressive Party were deserting him because of his stand on war issues, and that he was drawing closer to his onetime political foes as his enthusiasm for his reformer friends waned--all aspects of this curious turn of fate--seemed to concern the Colonel but very little. He began to resume his correspondence with many of his former friends; throughout 1915, the men of great wealth whom he had so severely chastized in his role as Progressive leader were "slowly changing their spots, were being transfigured from malefactors to benefactors;" and the 1912 charges of thievery against the Republican directorate were becoming "perceptibly blurred."⁷⁶

Certainly no small detail in the Roosevelt disin-interest in progressivism was the record of the Wilson Administration during that first term. Such elements of legislation as the tariff-reducing Underwood Bill, the Federal Reserve Act, the Clayton Amendment to the Sherman Anti-Trust Act, the LaFollette's Seamen's Bill, a child labor enactment, and the founding of the Federal Trade Commission provided an excellent record of reform enactments. It was a program sufficiently good to take the wind out of the sails of the reform-preaching Progressives. Virtually all

⁷⁵ Roosevelt, Letters, VIII, 1013. Quoted by editor Morison (Roosevelt, Letters) from a Lodge letter to Roosevelt.

⁷⁶ Mowry, Progressive Movement, 322.

justification for the existence of the Progressive Party, therefore, had been eliminated. Wilson had stolen Roosevelt's platform and the Colonel was quite aware of the larceny which had so successfully been carried out.⁷⁷

As the time approached for party leaders to think in terms of 1916 conventions, a rather strange political phenomena was working within the Progressive Party. That was the person of George W. Perkins, who was proving himself to be anathema to the other Progressive chieftains.⁷⁸ After the 1912 convention, Perkins had become the "receiver", the chief lieutenant, of the party. When his good friend Theodore went off to Brazil in 1913, the affairs of the party were left in his hands. And thus began the period of his absolute control, which he held "in the palm of his hand" until 1916.⁷⁹ Because of the autonomous nature of his rule over the Progressives, a severe split developed within

⁷⁷ Mowry, Progressive Movement, 287.

⁷⁸ The most influential men of the Progressive Party in the 1914-1916 period included:

Gifford Pinchot of Pennsylvania	Raymond Robins of Illinois
Matthew Hale of Massachusetts	Hiram Johnson of California
Chester Rowell of California	John Parker of Louisiana
William Allen White of Kansas	Victor Murdock of Kansas
William R. Stubbs of Kansas	Bainbridge Colby of New York
Everett Colby of New Jersey	Frank Knox of Michigan

- Ickes, "Progressive Party," 312.

⁷⁹ Perkins, an associate of J. P. Morgan and Company, had a background shaded by his arrest in 1906 on a warrant charging him with grand larceny of almost \$49,000 from the New York Life Insurance Company. This amount represented campaign funds donated to the Republican National Committee in 1904. Ickes, "Progressive Party," 307.

that used in his conversations with Perkins. To the Progressive leaders, he seemed to favor working with the Republicans from a position of strength; while

their ranks. Though most all the leaders found themselves lined up opposite the dictatorial Perkins, the J. P. Morgan associates had the support and confidence of Colonel Roosevelt--who had delegated to Perkins the top position in determining party policy.⁸⁰ Perkins made the decisions and spoke for the party. The fact that the Progressive National Committee was not called into session between 1912 and January 10, 1916, is an indication of the personal control and the one-man manipulation which he exercised over the organization.⁸¹ Perhaps most significant of all was the fact that he sat closest to the Colonel and had easiest and most frequent access to his ear. It was through the Roosevelt-Perkins discussions (called collusions by some) that the idea of a mutual Progressive-Republican candidate for 1916 became strongly developed.⁸²

For several months prior to the 1916 conventions, Roosevelt appeared to waver as he deliberated and discussed potential actions for the forthcoming political phase. With Perkins, he discussed the mutual candidate idea; with others, he hashed over the names of various individuals as potential Progressive presidential candidates.⁸³ To most everyone he

⁸⁰ Mowry, Progressive Movement, 291.

⁸¹ Ickes, "Progressive Party," 314.

⁸² Ibid., 313.

⁸³ It is known that Roosevelt also discussed the possibility of a mutual candidate with other Progressive leaders; however, the approach seemed different from that used in his conversations with Perkins. To the Progressive leaders, he seemed to favor working with the Republicans from a position of strength; while

⁸⁵ Ibid., 313.

seemed sincere in his determination not to be a candidate himself. He never spoke of wanting or expecting to run for office again. He was wary of the limitations of his health, and Ickes and others were convinced that he wouldn't consent to make another race unless supported so enthusiastically and unanimously that he would be unable to refuse. Roosevelt confided to William Allen White that he felt he should not be asked to "sacrifice" himself again.⁸⁴ "I have come to the conclusion," he told Ickes, "that I ought never to be a candidate for public office again. I will always be interested in public affairs, but my role, it seems to me, will be to raise the black flag and strike out at wrong whenever I see it."⁸⁵ Thus his desires for 1916 were not only implied but expressed. They were physical as well as oral. Though his adversaries contended that his rapprochement with the Republicans was an indication that he was laying groundwork for his candidacy, the very nature of his renewal of cordial relations with the G.O.P. was sufficient to refute such contentions. He was moving back into the Republican fold, and he was doing it through two approaches: (1) his frequent discussions regarding a possible Progressive-Republican candidate for 1916 (in which he never mentioned

to Perkins, there is reason to believe that he expressed approval of most any arrangement so long as it assured a Republican victory over Wilson. Ickes, "Progressive Party," 314.

⁸⁴ White, Autobiography, 312. To this, White retorted later: "No one entered Roosevelt in the 1912 campaign. He jumped into the furnace with Meshach and Abednego with a prophet's zeal. Wild horses could not have kept him out."

⁸⁵ Ibid., 313.

his own name); and (2) his expoundings on the conservatives' preparedness theories. Neither of these approaches indicated any burning desire on the ex-President's part to try again for the Presidency, especially in view of the fact that both alienated from him large voting blocs in the country.

The closer the Colonel moved in the direction of the Republicans, the more suspicious became his Progressive associates who feared that he would work some kind of deal with the G.O.P. regardless of the cost to the Progressives.⁸⁶ Their suspicions may very well have been with good foundation, for there is reason to believe that in 1915 he had favored the idea of no Progressive national ticket the following year. The means seemed to be of little import to him so long as the end was accomplished--the defeat of Wilson. This might connote a uniting behind a mutual candidate with the Republicans; or, if necessary, it could involve a return of all Progressives to the Republican camp with no strings attached. So strong were his convictions that Wilson should be defeated (hence, that there should be a Republican victory) that he appeared willing to vote for almost any Republican nominee except Taft.⁸⁷ In correspondence with Lodge, Roosevelt admitted that the Republicans could win in 1916 without the Progressives, and they could possibly lose with them. However, in the interest of uniting all anti-Wilson forces, the Colonel hoped the Republicans would take the necessary

⁸⁶ Mowry, Progressive Movement, 324. As cited from the New York Times, October 10, 1915.

⁸⁷ Ibid.

action to make it possible for the Progressives to join with them. He stated that he did not expect to separate himself from his Progressive supporters and would do anything possible to get them to act wisely.⁸⁸ Like Roosevelt, most Pro-

gressive During the time that Roosevelt was showing an increasing affection for Republican causes and for Old Guard personalities, they likewise were drawing closer to him. Mowry notes that various articles in the October, 1915, issue of the Republican National Magazine approached the subject of Theodore Roosevelt "with a gentleness of spirit" that "did not go unnoticed by either the Progressives or the Republicans."⁸⁹ But other Progressive leaders were also entertaining some pretty definite opinions. And they for the most part were not in harmony with the Colonel's. Victory in 1916 was not necessarily their aim. Many actually hoped for another Republican defeat, believing that one more setback would end the Republican Party as a reactionary organization. In such an event, they believed the Progressive Party would emerge as one of the two major political organizations in the country.⁹⁰ This Progressive desire for a "moral" victory, albeit an extermination of the Republicans, prevented any harmonious feeling between the rank and file of the two parties. Furthermore, this antipathy carried over into the Republican convention in 1916

⁸⁸ Roosevelt, Letters, VIII, 991. Letter dated November 27, 1915.

⁸⁹ Mowry, Progressive Movement, 323.

⁹⁰ Ickes, "Progressive Party," 312.

and was partially responsible for the hate shown by the Republican bosses toward Roosevelt and the Progressives--a hate not only nurtured since 1912 but engendered for those who would destroy their party. Like Roosevelt, most Progressives were not averse to the idea of a mutual candidate; but unlike him and Perkins, they considered themselves as the choosers, not the beggars. And unlike the Republicans, the Progressives saw in Roosevelt the only man capable of victory over Wilson.⁹¹

As the conventions drew closer, Roosevelt seemed to be consorting with two paramours. He gave his support to a meeting of the Progressive National Committee in January, and they in turn drew up a statement of party purpose which was consonant in all respects with the Colonel's desires. He pledged to the committeemen at this meeting to make an effort to join the Progressives with the Republicans under a "common leadership." This, he said, would be possible if the Republican convention were "responsive to the patriotic spirit that brought the Republican Party into being."⁹² Later that same month, Roosevelt devoted his pen to a lengthy letter to the Old Guard's Henry Cabot Lodge. Herein he extended advice to this Republican leader regarding the nature of the Republicans' campaign plans, and extolled the virtues of his own personal positions regarding preparedness and

⁹¹ Ickes, "Progressive Party," 313.

⁹² Roosevelt, Letters, VIII, 1000n. Roosevelt to Lodge, January 26, 1916.

⁹⁴ Ibid., 1014. Roosevelt to Lodge, February 4, 1916.

hyphenated Americanism.⁹³ If it is true that Roosevelt during the past three years had sincerely discounted any possibility that he would ever again be a presidential candidate, his pre-convention utterances were indicating a rather rapidly changing position. This perhaps was first shown in another letter he wrote to Lodge a few days later. To the Senator he appeared to be outlining reasons why he "could not" be a 1916 presidential candidate but refusing, at the same time, to close the door on such a possibility. The door, in fact, seemed to have been left very much ajar. Roosevelt pointed out that, in total disregard to his own interests, he had attacked the German-American and pacifist vote, hence rendering himself impossible as a candidate. But, he intimated his willingness to accept the call, if the popular feeling in the country and the "Republican" Party indicated that such was strictly for the good of the country. Further, he cautioned that it would be idle to nominate him if the country were in a mood of timidity regarding international relations.⁹⁴ Significantly, this lengthy bit of correspondence fails to reveal any Roosevelt thought of or reference to the Progressive Party, his relationship with the Progressives, or a possible Progressive nomination for himself.

In these pre-convention months, Roosevelt indicated that his was an untenable position, that he was seeking the

⁹³ Roosevelt, Letters, VIII, 1005. Roosevelt to Lodge, January 26, 1916.

⁹⁴ Ibid., 1014. Roosevelt to Lodge, February 4, 1916.

proper solution which would be to the satisfaction of all those groups who looked to him for leadership. Though he apparently sought long and hard for just the right answer, his resultant position seemed to please few of his adherents. He appeared to be sincerely devoted to his crusade for preparedness, and therefore he seemed to look upon the purely political machinations which were going on only as bothersome, but necessary, interruptions to his vital work. To George L. Meyer, promoter of the Roosevelt Republican League, he wrote: "I am not in the least interested in the political fortunes either of myself or any other man.... I am interested in awakening my fellow countrymen to the need of facing unpleasant facts.... I am interested in the triumph of great principles.... I will not enter into any fight for the nomination...." But, the omnipolitical Roosevelt, still suggestively left the nomination door open, asserting that "it would be a mistake to nominate me unless the country has in its mood something of the heroic...."⁹⁵ is that all men who To interpret the ever-so-complex Roosevelt must certainly have been a challenging task for his contemporaries. They surely wondered how a person could decry, as did he, any suggestion that he was striving for the only to

⁹⁵ Letter dated March 9, 1916. This pronouncement ostensibly was for the purpose of preventing damage to the policies he championed, which might come from overenthusiastic supporters or from local candidates attempting to ride his coattails. Roosevelt, Letters, VIII, 1024n. 1916.

⁹⁷ Ibid., 1038. Letter to Foster Vincent Brown, Republican Congressman from Tennessee, May 10, 1916.

⁹⁸ Ibid., 1038. Roosevelt to Brown, May 10, 1916.

nomination,⁹⁶ and yet, without expecting to be accused of hypocrisy, make the following declaration: "If a cut is to be healed, it must be healed to the bone. If I am nominated and accept the nomination, it will be with the determination to treat the past as completely past and to give absolutely fair play to all my supporters."⁹⁷ This quotation from a Roosevelt letter to one prominent Republican clearly indicates that he was thinking and planning even into the post-convention future regarding the problems he would face as a once-recalcitrant Republican. Justification or reconciliation of his contrasting statement can be accomplished only if the Colonel's critic will view him in this frame of reference: As a true patriot who is ever-willing to heed his country's call to duty, i.e. in this instance, run for political office. Perhaps this further quotation from the above-cited letter reveals such a Rooseveltian characteristic: "I regard this as a very great crisis in the nation's history.... My feeling is that all men who stand for Americanism, Preparedness and for International duty in this crisis should join, and whoever they are about to unite upon as leader should treat all of them with absolute fairness and justice, with reference only to their attitude in the present and without regard to past differences."⁹⁸

⁹⁶ Roosevelt, Letters, VIII, 1014. Roosevelt to Lodge, February 4, 1916.

⁹⁷ Ibid., 1038. Letter to Foster Vincent Brown, Republican Congressman from Tennessee, May 10, 1916.

⁹⁸ Ibid., 1038. Roosevelt to Brown, May 10, 1916.

Since its early phases, neither the Republican nor the Progressive parties had wholly supported the Roosevelt position in regard to America and the European war. In fact, some of the most outspoken opposition to Roosevelt had come from Progressive voices. The Colonel was most aware of these factors, and on the eve of the convention came to realize more and more that there was little room for expectation that he would be the 1916 choice of the Republicans. He wrote his friend Arthur Hamilton Lee that he did not believe the Republicans had any intention of nominating him, although he believed himself to have a "considerable following." He did not feel, however, that he had a majority of the people in his support, and definitely not enough to be reflected among the politicians at the convention. Recognizing that Charles Evans Hughes would probably be the G.O.P. nominee, Roosevelt asserted that the only chance Hughes had for victory lay in "my aggressive campaign of the last year and three quarters."⁹⁹

Despite Roosevelt's words to Lee, there remained one last thought in the Colonel's mind that he by chance would be selected at the Republican convention. Many suggestions have been proffered as reasons for his optimism. However, in all likelihood, it was the encouragement which came from his very closest friends, friends who had made great sacrifices for him in the past, that caused him to entertain such

⁹⁹ Roosevelt, Letters, VIII, 1052. Letter dated June 7, 1916, as "one of the strangest affairs in the history of American politics." Ickes, "Progressive Party," 322.

speculation. At least from the vantage point of hindsight, there was unmistakable evidence that the Republican leadership were determined to do one thing at the Chicago convention above all else--to stop Roosevelt.¹⁰⁰

From throughout the country, delegations arrived with instructions to support a loyal or true Republican, and the conservative element of the party had the strength to insure this through the manipulation of offices and committees. The Old Guard, however, could not be too careful in the choice of a candidate. They remembered well the defeat of 1912, and they realized that it would take Progressive votes to elect a Republican as President, unless some unforeseen development arose to weaken the Wilson position. Hence, there was much concern over nominating a man who would likewise please the Progressive delegates, who were meeting in convention simultaneously in that same city.¹⁰¹ Hovering over both conventions was the tenseness resulting from ever-closing American involvement in the war. These were not ordinary times, times for the full pleasures of politics, and the political leaders concerned saw that they were going to have to present for the country's consideration in November men who had the stature and ability to lead the nation through the ultimate crisis. Thus the Republican objective

¹⁰⁰ Mowry, Progressive Movement, 345.

¹⁰¹ Both conventions, held in Chicago, were in session June 7-12. The Progressive National Convention of that year was described by Harold L. Ickes, a delegate, as "one of the strangest affairs in the history of American politics." Ickes, "Progressive Party," 322.

was three-fold: (1) to nominate a man of stature and ability; (2) to nominate a man with at least a liberal tinge so as to have progressive appeal; and (3) to nominate someone besides Roosevelt. It was these three major conditions which caused most Republican eyes to turn to Charles Evans Hughes of the United States Supreme Court and former rather-liberal governor of New York.

The machinations between some of the leaders of the two conventions (especially by George W. Perkins) in an attempt to create a common candidate provided a unique experience in American politics. Both sides gave appearances of being willing to compromise. It became obvious however that the mass of the Progressives wanted to nominate Roosevelt, do it quickly, and go home.¹⁰² The Old Guard leaders, Boise Penrose, Murray Chrane, Reed Smoot, and Elihu Root, remembering 1912, chose to go down to defeat at the hands of Wilson rather than agree to nominate Roosevelt--who admittedly was the only man who could defeat the President.¹⁰³ Distrust of their leadership was rampant among Progressive ranks. For quite some time, there had been a considerable lack of faith in the Progressive prince-regent, Perkins. It appeared that most Progressives were dedicated to the idea of nominating Roosevelt and going down to defeat with him if necessary rather than supporting the Republican

¹⁰² Ickes, "Progressive Party," 322.

¹⁰³ Ibid., 313.

¹⁰⁴ Nowry, Progressive Movement, 324.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., 355.

nominee (unless that nominee happened to be Roosevelt also). And their rank and file were fearful lest they be misled. Certainly, the secret sessions between the Republican and Progressive leaders as well as Perkins' insistence that the Republicans be permitted to nominate first gave most Progressives adequate reason for unrest and distrust. It was not understandable to the delegates why it was important for the Republicans to be the first to nominate, since they believed the only sure way of getting Republican agreement on Roosevelt was for the Progressives to nominate first. Inasmuch as Perkins was solely responsible for this maneuver among the Progressives, his silence on the subject has left this big question unanswered. The opinion has been expressed, however, that Roosevelt so desired to see Wilson defeated that he was willing to have the Progressives go along with most any Republican candidate and have a united front, rather than to nominate him again, split the vote, and hence insure a Wilson victory. Because such a plan could best be achieved by letting the Republicans nominate first, there is every possibility that the Colonel had instructed Perkins to maneuver as he did.¹⁰⁴ Mowry believes that Roosevelt resolved in advance not to run on a third party ticket again unless the character of the Republican nominee forced him to in order to maintain his self-respect. Furthermore, if the Republican candidate happened to be Hughes, the Colonel had definitely decided not to run against him.¹⁰⁵

¹⁰⁴ Mowry, Progressive Movement, 324.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., 355.

Perhaps the Progressive delegates were ignorant of the extent to which Roosevelt was dedicated to a Wilson defeat and of the lengths to which he would go in bringing that about--even at the expense of his own political fortunes. It is not believed, however, that the Progressive convention was conducted as he would have desired. Exactly what Roosevelt's wishes were regarding the work of the convention are not known, but there is evidence to indicate that had he either been present or in better contact some matters would have been handled differently.¹⁰⁶ After two Republican convention ballots, which showed that Roosevelt had no real strength there, Nicholas

¹⁰⁶ Basis for this belief lies in Ickes' revelations concerning contact, or lack thereof, between Roosevelt and the Progressive leadership at the convention. Ickes points out that even though there was a direct wire providing phone communication between Sagamore Hill and Chicago, unfortunately it led into George W. Perkins' private suite in the headquarters hotel. Phone contact with the Colonel was limited by Perkins, therefore, to "his chosen few." This, of course, caused Roosevelt to see the Progressive convention only through the eyes of Perkins, and not as the great body of Progressives would have wanted him to see it. After adjournment, William Allen White finally got to talk with Roosevelt.* The Colonel expressed his displeasure at learning that Perkins had restricted the use of the direct phone; and White learned that Roosevelt had little, if any, knowledge of the National Convention. Ickes, "Progressive Party," 327.

*William Allen White, an ardent Progressive and long-time editor of the Emporia Gazette does not reveal this incident in his autobiography. Not only was White a close friend of Roosevelt's but their families were also friends. The two men saw each other often and corresponded regularly. Though White was a staunch support of the Colonel, he many times disagreed with him, e.g. over Wilson's foreign policy and rearmament.

Murray Butler, of the Republican National Committee and friend of the Colonel, called Oyster Bay and assured him that he could not be nominated.¹⁰⁹ Roosevelt in turn recommended that the Republicans nominate either Henry Cabot Lodge or Leonard Wood, believing that either would stand a good possibility of also getting the Progressive nomination.¹¹⁰ He then wired the Progressives his recommendation that they nominate Cabot Lodge. This recommendation, along with others' suggestions that Hughes be nominated, was booed down by the mass of Progressive delegates.¹⁰⁷ The Republicans, on their third ballot, proceeded to choose Hughes, and the Progressives almost simultaneously nominated Roosevelt by acclamation. Before the Progressive convention closed, however, Colonel Roosevelt sent a message to that body, rejecting the nomination, saying:¹⁰⁸

I cannot accept it at this time. I do not know the attitude of the candidate of the Republican Party toward the vital questions of the day. Therefore, if you desire an immediate decision, I must decline the nomination. But if you prefer it, I suggest that my conditional refusal to run be placed in the hands of the Progressive National Committee....

Roosevelt explained that the purpose of this conditional refusal was to leave the way open for future Progressive action. Should the Republican candidate not make satisfying statements regarding national policy, the

¹⁰⁷ Roosevelt, Letters, VIII, 1060n.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., 1062. Message undated.

¹¹¹ Ibid., 330.

Progressive National Committee and Roosevelt could then determine some action which they considered appropriate.¹⁰⁹

Thousands of Progressives who formerly looked to Theodore Roosevelt as their idol became an embittered group. They accused him of betraying the Progressive Party and of selling it out to the Republicans.¹¹⁰ Why had Roosevelt let all this happen, this mass of disorganization and confusion? Why had he even permitted a convention to be held in the first place if he had known he was going to slap it in the face? Why did he want to destroy the faith and hope of thousands of his adherents?

Ickes places much of the blame on Perkins. Before the convention, Roosevelt had talked only to the not-too-honorable Morgan associate, and not to the rank and file of the altruistic Progressives who were to be affected by his decision.¹¹¹ Perkins, said Ickes, must be given the "discredit for the ignominious and ignoble death of the Progressive Party." Because he wanted to be a kingmaker, he saw that he could be so only through the uniting of the Progressive and Republican parties. If such a union could be brought about under Roosevelt's leadership, that would be well and good with Perkins; but if this could not be accomplished, then he was ready to scuttle the too-trusting Roosevelt. By arranging to unite the parties, in

¹⁰⁹ Roosevelt, Letters, VIII, 1062.

¹¹⁰ Ickes, "Progressive Party," 328.

¹¹¹ Ibid., 330. Letters, VIII, 1063. Roosevelt to Russell dated June 16, 1916.

Perkins would be in a position to accept laurels for pre-venting a third party movement and subsequently be rewarded for a Republican victory (presumably).

Such a skilled and experienced politician as Roosevelt, according to Ickes, could not however be exonerated for not understanding Perkins' pre-convention maneuvers. Roosevelt owed it to himself and to his Progressive followers to determine what the plans of the "slippery" Perkins were.¹¹² Thus in the final analysis, Roosevelt must be held largely responsible for the destruction of progressivism in the Republican Party, for after the 1916 Progressive debacle, the truly liberal elements in Congress were without a party and could be effective only to a minimum degree if they returned to the Republican side of the aisle.¹¹³

What did Roosevelt think of the rough treatment he had received at the hands of the Old Guard leaders at the Republican convention? He had very little to say on the subject. However, to Isaac Russell of the New York Evening Mail he wrote: "They were more intent upon disciplining me and teaching a lesson in party regularity and party supremacy than anything else."¹¹⁴

Because of the many facets of character and personality which Charles Evans Hughes and Woodrow Wilson had in

¹¹² Ickes, "Progressive Party," 331.

¹¹³ Mowry, Progressive Movement, 208.

¹¹⁴ Roosevelt, Letters, VIII, 1063. Roosevelt to Russell dated June 16, 1916.

common, it has been a question as to the degree of acceptance which Roosevelt showed for the 1916 Republican nominee. The Colonel had fairly clearly exposed his feelings late the previous year when he said of the Justice: "I thoroughly dislike him." He questioned Hughes' thinking on such matters as preparedness, defense, and foreign policy. Furthermore, he said that Hughes "never forgives a man who renders him effective support; and when he is in office he loathes the politicians who have elected him to office."¹¹⁵ Certainly no love between the two men had ever been lost, because they were miles apart personally.¹¹⁶

Regardless of this feeling of animosity toward Justice Hughes, Roosevelt undertook a rather active campaign in his behalf. It might be noted, however, that Roosevelt in his campaigning laid much more stress on Hughes' positions regarding foreign affairs and preparedness than upon the potentials of the candidate himself.¹¹⁷ During the campaign, the ex-President commented privately that Wilson had been afraid of him and had never dared answer his charges, but that "if Hughes lets him, he will proceed to take the offensive against Hughes." "I shall do everything I can for him," the Colonel remarked, "but don't forget that the efficiency of what I do must largely

¹¹⁵ Roosevelt, Letters, VIII, 1064. To William Roscoe Thayer, June 16, 1916.

¹¹⁶ Roosevelt, Letters, VIII, 995. Roosevelt to Lodge, December 7, 1915.

¹¹⁷ Mowry, Progressive Movement, 357.

¹¹⁸ Russell Buchanan, "Theodore Roosevelt and American Neutrality," American Historical Review, XLIII (July, 1938), 784. Hereafter cited as Buchanan, "Roosevelt and Neutrality."

¹¹⁹ Progressive Party, 328.

depend upon Hughes."¹¹⁸ Obviously, Roosevelt was insinuating that if Hughes adopted a policy of me-tooism toward Wilson, it would make the Colonel appear as being in contradiction with his own candidate.

The former President's activity in the Hughes campaign was not altogether in the category of assets for the Republicans. Arthur S. Link asserts that Roosevelt was a "virtual millstone" around Hughes' neck. The "hapless" candidate, he says, was drawn into approving Roosevelt's declarations on preparedness and foreign policy, which enabled the Democrats to charge that the Republican candidate, like Roosevelt, harbored warlike designs. Comment was frequently made that "if Hughes is defeated, he has Roosevelt to thank for it."¹¹⁹

Ex-President Roosevelt's remarks about Charles Evans Hughes showed his ever-present abilities as a coiner of phrases, as well as his coolness toward the man. During one of the more depressing moments of the 1916 campaign, the Colonel is quoted as having called Hughes the "bearded lady."¹²⁰ He is also said to have frequently and sneeringly referred to Hughes as "another Woodrow Wilson with whiskers."¹²¹

¹¹⁸ Roosevelt, Letters, VIII, 1064. To William Roscoe Thayer, June 16, 1916.

¹¹⁹ Arthur S. Link, Woodrow Wilson and the Progressive Era (New York, 1954), 244.

¹²⁰ Frederic L. Paxson, review of Talks with Theodore Roosevelt by John J. Leary, Jr., American Historical Review, XXVI (October, 1920), 149.

¹²¹ Ickes, "Progressive Party," 328.

CHAPTER III

THE BEGINNING OF THE EUROPEAN WAR

What was Theodore Roosevelt's immediate reaction to the German invasion of tiny neighboring Belgium? And how did he parlay this issue into a stimulus for a national crusade for preparedness? These questions are paramount in a study of the ex-President in the first months of the European war.

"I am not prepared to say that in dire need the statesmen of a nation are not obliged to disregard any treaty, if keeping it may mean the most serious jeopardy to the nation." These words, reflecting upon the German violation of her treaty with Belgium, which guaranteed the latter's neutrality, were among the first written by ex-President Roosevelt upon the occasion of the subjugation of the Belgians by the Kaiser's troops. And they were written August 8, 1914, to his German friend, Professor Hugo Munsterberg, at Harvard. If this letter was to indicate any Rooseveltian position, besides an apparent justification of the German action, it was his belief in the futility of arbitration treaties. He saw these treaties, which had been negotiated under the Taft Administration and which were being promoted by President Wilson (and his "pacifist supporters"), as being utter folly. The invasion of Belgium was "proof of the pudding."¹

¹ Roosevelt, Letters, VII, 795. Foreign Policy of the U.S., Outlook, CVII (August 22, 1914), 1012.

The concern of Theodore Roosevelt over the injustice done to Belgium, which he preached upon so many times in later months, was not to be detected during the first two months of the war. He had issued his statement of support for the President and his administration during this time of crisis; and in late August in the Outlook he reiterated this pledge and further stated: "I am not now taking sides one way or the other as concerns the violation or disregard of these treaties. When giants are engaged in a death by wrestle, as they reel to and fro they are certain to trample on whomever gets in the way...."² But the war was very young and the Belgium Commission had not arrived as yet to stir up American sympathies, and other developments were yet to take shape which would serve to prejudice the minds of the American neutrals. As the month of August, 1914, progressed, Roosevelt's opinions gradually took on a more positive aspect, and they were moving in the direction of sympathy for the British cause. He wrote to his friend Arthur Hamilton Lee on August 22nd that while Americans felt that the course taken by Germany on her Western frontier was a menace to civilization, the issue between the Slav and the German was still in doubt. Roosevelt suggested to Lee that if he had been President he would have registered the strongest kind of protest, a protest that would have meant something, over the German levy of huge war contributions on Belgium. Furthermore, he

² Theodore Roosevelt, "The Foreign Policy of the U.S.," Outlook, CVII (August 22, 1914), 1012.

viewed the activities of Germany over the past forty-three years as having menaced every nation where she thought it was to her advantage to do so. As for American relations with England, as compared with relations with Germany, Roosevelt observed that the former had been improving for several decades, while American attitudes toward Germany had undergone a considerable change throughout the previous fifteen to twenty years because of that nation's hostile attitude. He insisted that surely the directors of German policy by this time must have realized the damage they had done.³ Thus it is observed that Roosevelt was nudging closer to the Allied position in the European war but still writing in a fairly neutral and objective vein.

By September 4th, Roosevelt was taking more emphatic views toward the belligerents, pacifists, and arbitration treaties. In another letter to Lee, on this date, he praised the heroic part being played by the British, and assured Lee that England was as certain to win this time as she was against Napoleon a century before. He condemned his fellow-countrymen who thought that universal arbitration treaties "with Paraguay and similar world powers" were sufficient force to supercede military strength. Likewise, he condemned the pacifists, those "peace-at-any-price men" who tended to support the "apostles of brutal violence" in time of crisis, and hence who "now have a sneaking admiration for Germany." He acknowledged that he had a very real

³ Roosevelt, Letters, VII, 809.

Roosevelt to Lee, September 4, 1914.

⁵ Baker, Wilson, V, 162.

and sincere liking and respect for the Germans individually, but, when it came to their treatment of Belgium, there just wasn't even room for argument. The Germans had trampled, to suit their own purposes, their solemn obligations to Belgium and on that country's rights. In a previous letter to Lee, Roosevelt had accused Wilson of being almost as much of a "prize jackass" as Bryan, and he now observed that there was no opportunity on this side of the Atlantic to display heroic qualities and no indication of a desire to do so even if the need arose. These were trying and difficult times he recognized.⁴ Herein, Roosevelt not only revealed his newly partisan views but also discarded any pretense of support, or even neutrality, toward the President. His vitriolic words indicated that he had assumed the role of arch-critic of the Administration, a role he was to play relentlessly for the next four and one-half years.

Whereas Roosevelt had once stated (September 23, 1914) that the United States did not have the "smallest responsibility for what has befallen" Belgium, and that only urgent national duty would justify our departing from our traditional neutrality and policy of non-interference, by late September of this first war year he was no longer intimating that he would act as President Wilson did in this crisis.⁵ In an article in the Outlook, September 23, 1914, Roosevelt seemed to officially break his silence and/or neutralism regarding the prospects for peace, in the light of the wrongs

⁴ Roosevelt, Letters, VIII, 817. Roosevelt to Lee, September 4, 1914.

⁵ Baker, Wilson, V, 162.

visited upon Belgium. He insisted that he was not anti-German, but was emphatic in stating: "I am anti-brutality!" And he assured his readers that had Britain or France been as guilty of brutal actions in Belgium as was Germany, he would be just as critical.⁶

During August, the Belgian mission had been to the United States. The unmeasurable sympathy which they created in this country for their cause was having its telling effects upon Theodore Roosevelt. He could still see some justification for the cause of either side in the war, but he was becoming more and more impressed with the fact that small, innocent Belgium had been "clobbered" in her neutral role while relying the sanctity of her treaty with Germany. To Count Albert Apponyi of Hungary, Roosevelt wrote: "If treaties are ever to amount to anything... then some efficient way must be designed for preventing the recurrence of the kind of thing that has happened to Belgium."⁷

In the month of September (1914) the ex-President adopted two specific personal policies which were to guide him in his thinking for the remainder of his life. Because he had seen through Belgium's experience that treaties can be inviolate only when backed up by force, he translated this as meaning that the United States should immediately strengthen its defenses. At this same time he insisted, for

⁶ Theodore Roosevelt, "The World War: Its Tragedies and Its Lessons," Outlook, CVIII (September 23, 1914), 169.

⁷ Roosevelt, Letters, VIII, 819. Letter dated September 17, 1914.

the first time since 1910, that another of our responsibilities was to work for a world league of nations which would be backed by force.⁸

Another Theodore Roosevelt's initial neutrality can be said to have been definitely terminated as of October 3, 1914, when he wrote to his friend Cecil Arthur Spring-Rice that the United States should have accepted the Hague treaties as a "serious" obligation. Had he been President, he asserted, he would have called on all neutral nations to aid the United States in enforcing these treaties.⁹ This was obviously an important supplement to, if not an abject contradiction and rejection of, his previous policy as indicated only ten days earlier--when he wrote in the Outlook strictly as a neutralist and in academic platitudes concerning our defenses and a world league.¹⁰ Thus within a span of ten days, the former President moved the whole distance which differentiates the isolationist from the interventionist. Furthermore, from this point, his attitude regarding Germany's guilt hardened, and his attitude toward the Wilson-Bryan policy of neutrality became more wrathful.

As to the reason for the very apparent Roosevelt reversal of attitude toward America's position in the European war, there are as many opinions as there are

⁸ Theodore Roosevelt, "The World War: Its Tragedies and Its Lessons," Outlook, CVIII (September 23, 1914), 169.

⁹ Roosevelt, Letters, VIII, 821.

¹⁰ Theodore Roosevelt, "The World War: Its Tragedies and Its Lessons," Outlook, CVIII (September 23, 1914), 169-78.

authorities. It is suggested that the old Rough Rider could not bear the thought of finding himself on the same side of an issue as his two arch-antagonists, Wilson and Bryan.¹¹ Another view is that the Colonel was merely emerging from a condition of confusion and was just now beginning to see and to state his position clearly. Pringle contends that Roosevelt's were the inevitable first reactions of a man who was a militarist at heart, who would not have hesitated to violate a treaty for righteousness, and who worshiped military efficiency, the sufferings and cruelties being the necessary evils.¹² But with the opportunity of two months of meditation on the subject, his long-established attitude of suspicion of both the Kaiser and the British had undergone a change. His preference for the British had become obvious; initial reactions had faded. He found himself in sympathy for the Belgians, for like most Americans he began to tag the Germans as aggressors. Furthermore, he was influenced to support the British position of maintaining the status quo in international affairs.

The rather sudden change of the Roosevelt position was indeed unique. Probably never before had any public figure shifted so decisively and so suddenly. Mowry reasons that a multiplicity of factors was involved, inasmuch as Roosevelt himself was a compound character. Like others, Mowry recognizes the power of the warrior strain in the

¹¹ Mowry, Progressive Movement, 313.

¹² Mowry, Progressive Movement, 312. to an article which appeared in the New York Times of November 10, 1914.

¹³ Pringle, Roosevelt, 578.

former President. Action was more natural for him than reflection, hence reflection resulted only after time had made it possible.¹³

A second factor in his reversal of position was the ex-President's basic nature of taking sides on every question, he being a very partisan individual. Politics assuredly played another part in the formulation of the new Rooseveltian position. The Colonel had run into a blind alley in 1914 under the banner of progressivism, and it was interpreted that his new attitude toward the European conflict was an attempt to mend his political fences and fortunes on the issues of preparedness and war.¹⁴ Thus, if he could win the support of large numbers of non-partisans and Republicans on these issues, he would be able to work for a rapprochement with his mother party from a position of strength instead of a position of weakness, which would have been the situation had he sought a reunion of his Progressives with the Republicans.

Mowry's final point in explaining this action taken by Roosevelt is the ex-President's antagonism for Woodrow Wilson. These two men were contrasted as Democrat and Republican, as introvert and extrovert, as scholar and activist, and as idealist and pragmatist. Obviously, they had little in common. Both were certain they spoke the

¹³ Mowry, Progressive Movement, 313.

¹⁴ Ibid., Reference is made by Mowry to an article which appeared in the New York Times of November 10, 1914.

voice of the people on certain subjects and that they spoke with divine authority. Wilson in 1912 had beaten Roosevelt at his own game of progressivism and reform, and furthermore had translated his campaign promises into reality. Wilson's "New Freedom" had virtually exterminated any hope of future Progressive Party virility. To be sure, the Colonel scorched under these thoughts, but his hatred for Wilson was climaxed by memories of the "insulting" treaty which the Chief Executive and Secretary of State Bryan had negotiated with Colombia over the Panama affair.¹⁵ Roosevelt's reaction to this affront by Wilson and Bryan undoubtedly prompted his remark that "I really believe that I would rather have Murphy, Penrose or Barnes [his bitterest enemies within the Republican Party] as the standard bearer of this nation [than Wilson]."¹⁶

It may be reasonably concluded that Roosevelt's emotional intensity in hurrying America into the war can be attributed chiefly to his patriotism and his bias for the Allies, but no small factor was the former President's burning aversion for Woodrow Wilson. While the Colonel undoubtedly would have been on the side of the Allies regardless of what man and what party controlled the White House,

¹⁵ Mowry, Progressive Movement, 313. This treaty, which was not passed until after Wilson left office and revisions had been made, originally provided for an apology to the Colombian Government for the actions of the Roosevelt Administration in the Panama incident plus an indemnity payment of twenty-five million dollars. Baker, Wilson, IV, 427-28.

¹⁶ Roosevelt, Letters, VIII, 861. Roosevelt to Henry Cabot Lodge, December 8, 1914.

his hatred of the Princeton professor unquestionably caused him to be more positively biased for the Allied cause--a stand which placed him normally, naturally, and somewhat happily in opposition to Wilson and the Administration's policy of neutrality.

H. L. Mencken, the reformer against reformers, was much more critical of the new Roosevelt position on the Belgian issue than were others. He suggested that the Colonel's was a calculated reaction to a series of factors and events. These included the deluge of German atrocity stories which were spread throughout the United States and the subsequent campaign to enlist American sympathies. In addition, by the middle of August, the British propaganda was in full swing and soon thereafter this country was flooded with "inflammatory stuff," which, six weeks after the opening of the war, had created a situation whereby it was hazardous for a German in America to state his country's case. The Wilson Administration, in supporting a policy of neutrality, provided an opportunity for Roosevelt, said Mencken, and he leaped to it with sure instinct. Here was a ready-made issue, full of emotional possibilities, stupendously pumped up by extremely clever propaganda, which had not been embraced so far by any "rabble-rouser of the first magnitude." Here was the Rough Rider's golden opportunity to deal a mortal blow to the Administration which he so detested, and thereby enhance greatly his possibilities of regaining his old leadership of the G.O.P. and occupancy of the White House. "Is it any wonder," Mencken asked, "that he gave a whoop, jumped upon his cayuse, and began screaming for war? In war lay the confusion of Wilson, and the

melodramatic renaissance of the Rough Rider, the professional hero, the national Barbarossa."¹⁷

Mencken reasoned further that had it not been for the astuteness of the British press agents and tear squeezers, if the indignation over the invasion of Belgium had failed to materialize, and if the President had been "whooping for war with the populace firmly against him," then assuredly "the moral horror of Roosevelt would have stopped short at a very low amperage, and...he would have refrained from making it the center of his policy."¹⁸ "My guess is," said the perspicacious Mencken, "that Roosevelt, like the great majority of other Americans, was not instantly and automatically outraged by the invasion of Belgium." Instead, he probably viewed it as "a fine piece of virtuosity, pleasing to a military connoisseur."¹⁹

William Allen White attributed the reversal in the Colonel's policy to the wave of rage in the United States over Belgium's fate at the hands of Germany. This wave, said White, carried Roosevelt along with it, and by winter "he was well established as a Man of Wrath, raging at Wilson for his neutrality."²⁰

That the Colonel was greatly influenced by many factors and from many quarters cannot be minimized. At the beginning of the war, his apparent political ambitions would

¹⁷ H. L. Mencken, A Mencken Chrestomathy, 234.

¹⁸ Ibid., 236.

¹⁹ Ibid., 234.

²⁰ White, Autobiography, 507.

not have permitted him to overlook a statement by so important a Republican personage as Henry Cabot Lodge. Lodge urged that America had the duty of observing "strict neutrality as between the belligerents, with all of whom we are at peace." It appears somewhat natural that the Senator's statement should have been followed by Roosevelt's advocacy of strict neutrality, contending that "we should remain entirely neutral, and nothing but urgent need would warrant breaking our neutrality and taking sides one way or the other;"²¹ and by his article in the Outlook in which he congratulated the country on its separation from European quarrels which made possible the preservation of our peace.²²

Roosevelt's two-months' silence on the issue of Belgium is attributed by Russell Buchanan to the former President's desire to avoid public expression of his opinion so as not to embarrass the Administration in any steps which it might take.²³ Lyman Abbott, editor of the Outlook and apologist for Roosevelt, set up the doctrine, according to Mencken, that the invasion of Belgium threw the Colonel into an instantaneous and tremendous rage of moral indignation, and that the delay in the latter's public exhibition thereof was due to his (Abbott's) fatuous interference.²⁴

²¹ Baker, Wilson, V, 19.

²² Theodore Roosevelt, "The World War: Its Tragedies and Its Lessons," Outlook, CVIII (September 23, 1914), 169.

²³ Buchanan, "Roosevelt and Neutrality," 775.

²⁴ H. L. Mencken, A Mencken Chrestomathy, 233.

they were "rocking the boat" in our international relations

The Roosevelt motives and developments during the August-September period of 1914 seem to shape themselves into a picture-forming pattern, and the partisans on the issues of this period have not seemed reluctant to state whether this was an unconscious development on the Colonel's part or if it was the result of the machinations of one of America's greatest and most astute political minds.

Bryan made the statement that "if this country needed a million men...the call would go out at sunrise and the sun would go down." As the European war developed and its scope was understood by Americans, there was a largely-unconscious move to determine and choose sides between Germany and the Allies. Opposing opinions and opposing camps evolved rather rapidly and there came to be a hot rivalry between them. One element advocated a steady and vigorous pressure for peace, this being the surest way out of our international troubles. These were the pacifists, and their idol was Secretary of State William Jennings Bryan. On the other extreme were those who demanded military preparation. They probably were best represented by ex-President Roosevelt. In the beginning, the strength of the pacifists was centered in the agricultural Midwest and the West, while the advocates of preparedness were confined largely to the East, their doctrine being based upon industrial and financial interests rather than upon agricultural. As for President Wilson, in the early months of the war he regarded both of these movements as unnecessary and extreme. He felt that they were "rocking the boat" in our international relations

and were creating a divided front at home. However, between the two groups, the President found himself most opposed to the preparationists, whose lack of numbers was said to have been made up in economic power.²⁵

While the pacifists vociferously preached their theory--almost a creed--the men of preparedness warned of international dangers and our need to prepare to meet them. Bryan made the statement that "if this country needed a million men...the call would go out at sunrise and the sun would go down on a million men in arms."²⁶ Thus, he saw no validity to the preparedness argument. For the other side, Owen Wister, author and personal friend of Theodore Roosevelt, was writing that the case of Germany "is a hospital case, a case for the alienist; the mania of grandeur, Wilson, complemented by the mania of persecution."²⁷ There was a "diseased mental state," he asserted, as he struck at the influence of Prussianism on Germany--Prussianism which had put its uniform on Germany's brains as well as its body and which had established the new trinity of German worship; the super-man, the super-race, and the super-armed-state.²⁸ China, Wister said, had built a stone wall against

²⁵ Baker, Wilson, VI, 2.

²⁶ This statement was first reported in the New York Times of December 11, 1914, at which time that publication castigated Bryan for such an utterance. It went on to support another cabinet member, Secretary of War Garrison, who was in favor of at least a mild form of preparedness. Baker, Wilson, VI, 2.

²⁷ Owen Wister, The Pentecost of Calamity (New York, 1915), 73.

²⁸ Ibid., 86.

the world, and Germany was building a wall of the mind.²⁹ Furthermore, "if the Fourth of July and the Declaration it celebrates still mean anything to us," he warned, "let our arm be strong."³⁰

Wister was an early student of the Rooseveltian preparedness theory and he became one of its most ardent exponents. In the darkening days of fall, 1914, there were few, however, who cared to support the newly enunciated doctrines of the ex-President, either from a patriotic or a political standpoint. The Colonel's campaign for preparedness was truly begun under great handicaps. He had little following of any kind. Most of his conservative supporters had evaporated after his 1912 endorsements of radicalism, and much of his Progressive following had drifted to Wilson, in view of their approval of his domestic policies.³¹

The war in Europe was an event which to Roosevelt appeared as an argument for his life-long policy of a strong army and navy. By the most powerful technique of which he was capable, including the use of irony, warnings, appeals, and invective, the Colonel pursued his campaign for preparedness from late 1914 to the date of our entry into the war almost three years later. Eventually, this campaign became

merged with his advocacy of American participation in the

²⁹ Owen Wister, The Pentecost of Calamity (New York, 1915), 89.

³⁰ Ibid., 140.

³¹ Mark Sullivan, Our Times: Over Here 1914-1918 (New York, 1933), 203. This work hereafter cited as Sullivan, Over Here.

war on the side of the Allies. It was a double cause, a two-headed crusade.³²

On August 18, 1914, President Wilson had given his message to the people. Almost universally well-received, his program called for steadiness and a determined attitude of peace. He urged Americans to conduct themselves in a manner which would best safeguard the nation; and he called for neutrality in fact as well as in name, and for impartiality in thought as well as in action. The President emphasized the need for and the duty of "one great nation" to remain neutral so as to play the important role of impartial mediator.³³

As several weeks passed, many persons in high places throughout the country were becoming somewhat concerned with the nature and condition of the nation's military. Representative A. P. Gardner³⁴ demanded (in October) that a National Security Commission be created to report on defense conditions in the United States. But he got no reply from the President. Colonel House was also having qualms regarding our security. He had been conferring with General Wood, and, as a result, had concluded that we should build

³² Sullivan, Over Here, 202.

³³ This speech by the President must be viewed in the light of the recent events which had left deep scars on his personal life. On this date, Wilson had returned from Georgia and the funeral of his long-suffering wife, Mrs. Ellen Axson Wilson. Baker, Wilson, V, 19. It has been questioned if the President's address was influenced by his tragedy.

³⁴ Gardner was Chairman of the House Committee on Military Affairs.

up the armed forces so as to prevent any nation from thinking of attacking us. House submitted this conclusion to the President in the form of a recommendation, but the result was not the same as in Gardner's case. This time, the Chief Executive did reply--in a rebuff. He said that he "did not believe there was any necessity for immediate action," fearing that to do so would shock the country.³⁵ Thus, while those who favored an increase in the country's armaments worked in behalf of such a program, the President on the other hand maintained from the outset a calmness and a disinterest which alarmed and infuriated his adversaries. To Roosevelt, who had become the voice of preparedness and the conscience of national honor and morality, the Presidential attitude was intolerable and detestable.³⁶

The German invasion of neutral Belgium had now become a symbol to Roosevelt--a symbol which was to remain with him for the duration. This greatest of all wars was summoning up in him a shining spirit of sacrifice and patriotism. But at the same time, it was stripping him of his sense of proportion and fairness.³⁷ He lashed out at Woodrow Wilson with a wrathful vengeance that would excite the admiration of Beelzebub. In the course of his attacks, the Colonel accused the President of inconsistency, hypocrisy,

³⁵ Roosevelt Letters, VIII, 821. Roosevelt to Cecil

³⁵ Charles Seymour, The Intimate Papers of Colonel House (2 vols., Boston, 1926), I, 298.

³⁶ Mowry, Progressive Movement, 319.

³⁷ Ibid. to France, somewhat belatedly perhaps, charged that his country had not done its duty in regard to Belgium. Baker, Wilson, V, 164.

despicableness, timidity, ridiculousness, and of representing the "nadir" of American misconduct. He found the Administration's international policy to be one of "milk and water," fantastic, "diluted-mush", and one encouraging a Chinafication of the country. Despite his recent attacks on the Administration's policies, he never fooled himself into believing, especially in these early months of the war, that he had the support of the American masses. On October 3, 1914, he wrote his friend Spring-Rice that he was "certain that the majority are now following Wilson."³⁸ Recognizing and admitting that the Administration "only too well represents the American people,"³⁹ he seemed most aware of his impotence. His was a very lonely voice in the woods, and effectiveness was yet to be realized.⁴⁰

What did the President think of the thundering attacks which were made upon him and his administration during the period of American neutrality? The answer is largely a secret which only Wilson himself knew. Seldom did he ever publicly recognize Roosevelt, and records of his private correspondence and conversation reveal very little of his attitude toward his bitter antagonist. In 1914 and 1915, he recognized that the public for the most part looked at

³⁸ Roosevelt, Letters, VIII, 821. Roosevelt to Cecil Arthur Spring-Rice.

³⁹ Buchanan, "Roosevelt and Neutrality," 776.

⁴⁰ Up to November, 1914, no responsible American critic, except Roosevelt, had raised a protest over the Wilson foreign policy. It was then that the American Ambassador to France, somewhat belatedly perhaps, charged that his country had not done its duty in regard to Belgium. Baker, Wilson, V, 164.

Theodore Roosevelt as a scold with but little support. Wilson, therefore, felt safe and ignored him. He was as subtle with his silence as he was with his words, for he pretended that he did not know that the man or the attacks existed.

He is quoted as having said: "The way to treat an adversary like Roosevelt is to gaze at the stars over his head."⁴¹

Wilson would not permit his supporters nor members of his administration to answer his critics, especially Roosevelt.

"Please don't give yourself any distress or concern about what Mr. Roosevelt is saying," Wilson wrote Dudley Field

Malone on December 9, 1914. "The very extravagance and unrestrained ill feeling of what he is now writing serve to nullify any influence that his utterances could have.

He cannot possibly in his present situation or temper cause any embarrassment which need give us a second thought. I am sincerely sorry that he should have so forgotten the dignity and responsibility of a man placed as he is who might exercise so great an influence for good if he only saw and chose the way."⁴²

The Wilson Administration gained a slight breathing spell from the sulphurous attacks of the Colonel, who had seemed to lurk at every turn. This came at the request of the persons for whom Roosevelt was campaigning in the fall elections of 1914. His candidates asserted that Wilson's policies in foreign affairs, which Roosevelt had consistently attacked, were popular with the people. Thus,

⁴¹ Sullivan, Over Here, 203.

⁴² Baker, Wilson, V, 165.

the Colonel conceded to wait until after the elections before hitting at the President on this subject. He waited; but once the ballots were in the boxes, he wasted little time in coming back to his point. The attack was resumed in an article he wrote for the New York Times on December 6th.⁴³

A curious feature at the beginning of the European war was the fact that important figures from both sides of the barbed wire sought Roosevelt's ear--at the same time that Wilson was minimizing the Colonel's worth to anyone or to any cause. Both the Germans and the Allies placed a high value on securing his sympathy. Through personal visits and by correspondence, the cause of the Central Powers was placed before him for his consideration by such men as German Ambassador Johann von Bernstorff; Harvard professor Hugo Munsterberg; Bradford Academy professor Edmund Otto von Mach; Baron Ladislaus Hengelmuller, former Austrian Ambassador to the United States; Count Apponyi of Hungary; and Professor Kuno Meyer of the University of Berlin.⁴⁴ Important British leaders who sought the Roosevelt understanding included his long-time friend and Member of Parliament, Arthur Hamilton Lee; Cecil Arthur Spring-Rice; Lord James Bryce; Rudyard Kipling, who wrote Roosevelt regarding U. S. inaction regarding Belgium; and Sir Edward Grey, British Foreign Secretary, who expressed

⁴³ Mowry, Progressive Movement, 308.

⁴⁴ Buchanan, "Roosevelt and Neutrality," 779.

⁴⁷ Buchanan, "Roosevelt and Neutrality," 786.

to Roosevelt his convictions regarding British innocence in the war.⁴⁵ And always, the Colonel was in close touch with his old friend Jean Jules Jusserand, a man of letters and the French Ambassador to the United States.⁴⁶

Although Roosevelt took a strong anti-German position and became a bitter opponent of German policy quite soon after the beginning of the war, he remained friendly to his pro-German acquaintances, and he purported to have an open mind in their relations. The Colonel consulted them early in the war to learn their side of the story before he drew his own conclusions. Both he and his German correspondents were vigorous in their attempts to convince each other of the validity of their positions. Roosevelt never hesitated to be most emphatic with them in pointing out his charges against Germany. There could be no serious question of fact, he told them, regarding the truthfulness of the stories of the subjugation of Belgium and of the killing of Americans on the high seas by submarine warfare.⁴⁷ Sometimes the correspondence became a little heated, each side was playing for high stakes. But Roosevelt continued to attempt to prove that his policies were dictated by his concern for his country's best interests, and not by any prejudice he had for or against any foreign nation. This he pointed out to Hugo Munsterberg in a letter of December 23, 1914. "It is possible," said the

⁴⁵ Buchanan, "Roosevelt and Neutrality," 779. was some-
time between September 27 and October 3, 1914.

⁴⁶ Paxson, Pre-War Years, 34.

⁴⁷ Buchanan, "Roosevelt and Neutrality," 786. The World War

Colonel, "you may be interested in seeing for your private information (and von Mach's), a letter I wrote in answer to a friend who desired me to support an Anglo-American, and alliance movement. At any rate, I try to play fair!"⁴⁸ In the letter referred to, Roosevelt had refused to join such an alliance because he did not believe that it was the proper thing for Americans to do. "I do not believe in hyphenated Americans," he asserted in his reply.⁴⁹ To others as well as his German friends, therefore, the former President emphasized Americanism and the need to do what he considered as right for America. The first time that Roosevelt openly criticized Germany, however, he immediately lost favor with the German press. The Cologne Gazette attacked him editorially as one who was "never gifted with modesty," who lacked "a full insight into European affairs." The publication pointed out that "when anybody is in office, other people have respect for the fact, and foreigners are treated in accordance with the prestige which they enjoy at home. That was why Roosevelt was formerly treated with special respect in Germany. At the last Presidential election he lost all his prestige."⁵⁰ This newspaper article was a reaction to the Colonel's recent writings, all of which cast a heavy shadow over Germany.⁵¹

⁴⁸ Roosevelt, Letters, VIII, 868.

⁴⁹ Ibid., 867. Roosevelt to Mrs. Ralph Sanger, December 22, 1914.

⁵⁰ Ibid., 821n. The date of this publication was sometime between September 27 and October 3, 1914.

⁵¹ These articles by Roosevelt were later compiled and published in a book entitled America and the World War

Attacks upon him by the foreign press were dismissed by the ex-President without serious regard. He sincerely believed himself to be scrupulously fair toward Germany, and he asserted that he held no bitterness toward that country. His sole ambition, he contended, was to make his position "as clear as a bell."⁵² Great loss of life. Admittedly this was a terrible disaster. However, for the United States it had a far greater significance than the loss of human life.

This was the nature of the Roosevelt position as America sought to adjust itself to the existence of the European conflict. Ensuing events and developments, the sinkings of the Lusitania and the Arabic, and the gaining momentum of the Plattsburg idea, were to mold further the former President's ideas. They seemed to corroborate his already-expressed views and to make more definite the course which he had chosen.

The Germans, who even at this point in the war were hoping for American moral if not material support, appeared somewhat concerned over the reaction in the United States to the Lusitania affair. They attempted to justify their

actions by pointing to an advertisement which the German (New York, 1920). This little volume, which is introduced by a prayer for peace, contains twelve chapters, all concerned with the European conflict as it affected the United States. Among these were chapters on: "The Duty of Self-Defense and of Good Conduct Toward Others;" "The Belgian Tragedy;" "The Causes of the War;" "Preparedness Against War;" and "Utopia or Hell."

⁵² Roosevelt, Letters, VIII, 821. Roosevelt to Cecil Arthur Spring-Rice, October 3, 1914. referred to as the most famous newspaper advertisement in the world. Owen Wister, Roosevelt, The Story of a Friendship (New York, 1930), 342. This work is hereafter cited as Wister, Friendship.

CHAPTER IV

STIMULANTS TO PREPAREDNESS: LUSITANIA AND PLATTSBURG

I

On May 7, 1915, a German submarine sank the British liner Lusitania, at a great loss of life. Admittedly this was a terrible disaster. However, for the United States it had a far greater significance than the loss of human life. Americans pondered the meaning of this catastrophe not only because a large number of Americans were aboard the liner but also because the country had just been introduced to the brutality of a new type of warfare, and they were shocked. America seemed to indulge in a period of soul-searching, for the apparent purpose of determining where we should stand on this matter of ruthless submarine destruction.³

The Germans, who even at this point in the war were hoping for American moral if not material support, appeared somewhat concerned over the reaction in the United States to the Lusitania affair. They attempted to justify their actions by pointing to an advertisement which the German Ambassador had placed in a New York newspaper prior to the ship's sailing, warning its passengers of impending danger.¹ The German Government stated that the United States Government had not warned its civilians of the war zone and

¹ This insertion by the German Ambassador has been referred to as the most famous newspaper advertisement in the world. Owen Wister, Roosevelt, The Story of a Friendship (New York, 1930), 342. This work is hereafter cited as Wister, Friendship.

reminded that its expressed position had been that American citizens should either stay on U. S. ships or remain at home. Furthermore, the Germans said, the Lusitania carried over \$200,000 worth of ammunition in its cargo.²

The controversy arising from the sinking of this ship finally convinced the Administration that there was serious danger lurking in the immediate future for this country. The Wilson reaction had not only international but domestic overtones. Over a period of two and one-half months, the President sent three notes to the German Government concerning the Lusitania. The first was his "strict accountability" note. While this communication was cloaked in sufficiently strong language, Secretary of State Bryan, with the approval of the President, confided to the Austrian Ambassador (Dumba) that "this note was not to be taken seriously."³ This note, therefore, could be registered as nothing more than an obvious attempt to placate American public opinion. In addition, it was speculated that this "side statement" to the Austrian Ambassador was another effort by the President to gain German acceptance of his good offices for peace negotiations.⁴ The second of the three Lusitania notes was so much milder in tone than the first that Elihu Root was prompted to say: "You shouldn't shake your fist at a man and then shake your finger at

² "The Lusitania Torpedoed," Literary Digest, L (May 15, 1915), 1134.

³ Wister, Friendship, 346.

⁴ Ibid., 348.

him."⁵ Wilson's recognition of growing international danger prompted him on July 21st, 1915, the date of the third Lusitania note to Germany, to order his Army and Navy Secretaries to consider and report "far-reaching" programs of national defense.⁶

Serious-thinking people throughout the United States, and even in Europe, became concerned over the spiritual void which America was displaying in her actions and policies toward the war. The London Punch ran this poem in its columns following the disastrous loss of life on the sea:⁷

In silence you have looked on felon blows,
On butchers' work of which the waste lands reek;
Now, in God's name, from Whom your greatness flows,
Sister, will you not speak?

America, however, did not need her sister Europeans to remind her of her moral deficiencies, for we had our own built-in morality meter--a most energetic, effusive, and patriotic ex-President. Theodore Roosevelt had maintained a "comparative quiet" throughout the preceding nine months, giving the Administration some opportunity to develop and shape its war policies without undue criticism. But the Colonel, who had already become the recognized voice of preparedness, cried out at the neutrality displayed by the President in this time of crisis. He could no longer repress the urge to vent his frankest opinions publicly, opinions which he had made known for the most part only

⁵ Wister, Friendship, 344. 1915), 1197-99.

⁶ Frederic L. Paxson, "American War Government," American Historical Review, XXVI (October, 1920), 55.

⁷ Wister, The Pentecost of Calamity, 134.

privately to this point. He charged that the sinking of the Lusitania was "piracy on a vaster scale of murder than any old time pirate ever practised." He called it "cold-blooded murder."⁸

In the mind of Roosevelt, the Lusitania affair left no room for a feeling of neutrality in America. "For many months," he asserted, "our Government has preserved between right and wrong a 'neutrality' which would have excited the emulous admiration of Pontius Pilate--the arch-typical neutral of all time."⁹ On June 1, 1915, he wrote a progressive Republican friend that he wished to call his attention to the New York Times of that day "which gives a statement of Wilson that literally passes belief, for it closes with this remark: 'This is perhaps the very time when I would not care to arouse the sentiment of patriotism.' I think this should be framed with 'Remember the Maine' on the opposite column and underneath it the President's previous statement 'We are too proud to fight.'"¹⁰ Roosevelt was vehement in his hate for the President as well as in his conviction that there was a direct correlation between Germany and immorality, atrocities, and treachery. It seemed that he had the ability to believe without bounds anything concerning either Wilson or Germany.¹¹ It was

⁸ Buchanan, "Roosevelt and Neutrality," 782.

⁹ "America's Response to Germany's Challenge," Literary Digest, L (May 22, 1915), 1197-99.

¹⁰ Roosevelt, Letters, VIII, 925. To John G. Borglum, famous sculptor.

¹¹ Mowry, Progressive Movement, 315.

inconceivable to him that the United States should refrain from taking action in regard to the Lusitania matter, asserting that we owed it to humanity and to our own national self-respect to do something.¹² He demanded, among other things, that we immediately prohibit all commerce with Germany. As for hyphenated Americans, the New York Herald reported him as saying: "The hyphen was submarined with the Lusitania, and henceforth there can be no divided allegiance."¹³

Roosevelt was thoroughly angered by the President's speech (subsequent to the Lusitania sinking) in which he suggested that "there is such a thing as a nation being too proud to fight."¹⁴ And he railed in his antipathy for Secretary Bryan, who contended that the war in Europe was caused by preparedness.¹⁵ But, said Roosevelt, it was Wilson, not Bryan, who was the real enemy of the country's best interests. Even the German Ambassador became victim of one of the Colonel's blasts. In view of the threatening advertisement which he had placed in the newspaper regarding the sailing of the Lusitania, Roosevelt asserted that if he had been President, he would have put Ambassador Bernstorff aboard the Lusitania--to share its fate.¹⁶

¹² "The Lusitania Torpedoed," Literary Digest L (May 15, 1915), 1133-34.

¹³ "America's Response to Germany's Challenge," Literary Digest, L (May 22, 1915), 1198.

¹⁴ Wister, Friendship, 343. This statement appeared in the President's address to some 15,000 naturalized citizens in Philadelphia.

¹⁵ Ibid., 347.

¹⁶ Ibid., 342.

After these outbursts, there could be little doubt as to where the ex-President stood in regard to Germany, German-Americans, and the Wilson Administration. Whatever element of equivocation Roosevelt had shown previously in his attitude toward the war had completely evaporated. The summer of 1915 found his position toward the European country was to be well jelled.¹⁷ In the eyes of many of the nation's leaders, he had sounded the death knell of "watchful waiting."¹⁸

This period was described by a Roosevelt friend as one characterized by the emergence of the ex-President and the eclipse of President Wilson in matters of influencing public opinion.¹⁹ Depending on their success, it was expected that these camps would be held annually.

The "student camp" id II was basically Wood's. He saw it as Other than the Regular Army, which trained a relatively small number of men for military service, the only other sources of American military instruction during the half century prior to the war were the nation's Land Grant Colleges and the high schools. The Government, however, exercised no effective control over the programs being given at these schools and the training was generally

¹⁷ Buchanan, "Roosevelt and Neutrality," 783. (New York, 1921), 11. This work is hereafter cited as

¹⁸ "America's Response to Germany's Challenge," Literary Digest, L (May 22, 1915), 1198.

¹⁹ Wister, Friendship, 343.

defective and unsatisfactory. Furthermore, only college students of agricultural and mechanical schools and military academies were exposed to this military training, there being no such programs in the greater part of the old Eastern colleges, state universities, and private colleges.²⁰

To the university and college presidents of the country on May 10, 1913, Major General Leonard Wood, Army Chief of Staff, addressed a circular letter which announced that the Secretary of War had decided to hold two experimental summer military camps for the instruction of students. Their stated purpose was to increase the country's trained reserve with a class of men from whom, in time of national emergency, a large proportion of the commissioned officers would be drawn. Depending on their success, it was expected that these camps would be held annually.²¹

The "student camp" idea was basically Wood's. He saw it as being the only feasible means of giving officer reserve training in the absence of financial support from an uninterested Congress. Because the students were to finance all details in regard to their training, no legislation would be required.²²

These camps, which were inaugurated a year before the beginning of the European war and two years before

²⁰ Ralph Barton Perry, The Plattsburg Movement (New York, 1921), 11. This work is hereafter cited as Perry, Plattsburg.

²¹ Ibid., 2. work hereafter cited as Wood, Military

²² Ibid., 3.

preparedness became a popular national issue, served to furnish a model and precedent for the more famous Plattsburg, New York, camps of 1915 and 1916. It was the latter which then provided the name and impetus for numerous other such camps in the succeeding two years.

At the advent of the war, General Wood began agitating with his characteristic blunt vigor for a sound, national military policy--calling our preparedness situation "thoroughly unsatisfactory."²³ Due in large part to Wood's warnings, Theodore Roosevelt's utterances, and the public information program of the National Security League, the preparedness movement soon began to spread throughout the country. The Congress, to the contrary, was pacifically-minded, seeming to base its attitude to some degree on the protection offered by the arbitration treaties recently negotiated.²⁴ The advocates of preparedness did not share the security felt by those who chose to hide behind such treaties. General Wood, in his book Our Military History, pointed out the futility of arbitration unless it was approached from a position of strength.²⁵ Because of their stand on increasing the nation's military strength while de-emphasizing arbitration treaties, the adherents of like

²³ Baker, Wilson, VI, 2.

²⁴ Charles Seymour, Woodrow Wilson and the World War (New Haven, 1921), 82. This work hereafter cited as Seymour, Wilson and the War.

²⁵ Leonard Wood, Our Military History (Chicago, 1916), 47. This work hereafter cited as Wood, Military History.

²⁶ Perry, Plattsburg 19.

preparedness seemed to be in conflict with Administration sympathies, if not its policies.

In his official report for the year 1914, Secretary of War Garrison said: "The students' camps were very successful and bid fair to be more so and undoubtedly can and should be developed into a most valuable assistance." And President Wilson in his address to Congress on December 8, 1914, alluded to the camps and seemed to give them his tacit approval. "We must depend in every time of national peril," he stated, "upon a citizenry trained and accustomed to arms.... It will be right...to provide a system by which every citizen who will volunteer for the training may be made familiar with the use of modern arms, the rudiments of drill and maneuver; and the maintenance and sanitation of camps."²⁶ The words of the President and the Secretary, however, carried only a limited meaning. The camps were continued, but had only luke-warm support from these two.

The sinking of the Lusitania, May 7, 1915, touched the humanity and pride of a great mass of Americans. Their reaction to this act of brutality was a deep resentment against the Germans and a desire to take some form of action. The Plattsburg Movement was just such an action. It, like other activities which were undertaken, offered its participants an opportunity to engage in a form of patriotic effort.

The Plattsburg Movement, while an outgrowth of the student training camps, was different from these previous

²⁶ Perry, Plattsburg, 19.

training efforts inasmuch as it was originated by a group of young business and professional men (largely from New York) and was created for them and for others of similar interests. The charter members of this movement included such prominent young men as Elihu Root, Jr., Cornelius W. Wickersham, Hamilton Fish, Jr., and Theodore Roosevelt, Jr.²⁷ These names as well as their social and economic backgrounds would indicate the developing organization to have been one with a strong Republican flavor. This being true, there is little wonder, therefore, that these men emitted patriotism and preparedness of the variety which ex-President Roosevelt had been expounding for the previous seven months.

Plattsburg came to have a national character because of the men from all parts of the country who had asked to participate. To the young men who promoted the establishment of the camp, General Leonard Wood, Commanding General of the important Department of the East, promised his "heartly cooperation." Plattsburg, therefore, in some measure had the assured assistance and supervision of the War Department, and from its early beginnings, it was a movement which demanded immediate action and personal effort on the part of the trainees. The men involved publicly expressed their alarm that they and their country were almost entirely without military experience at this time of international crisis--a crisis in which the United States assuredly was

²⁷ Perry, Plattsburg, 26.

becoming more deeply involved.²⁸ At the camp, the men were told by General Wood and other officers of the defenselessness of America. It was revealed to them that the United States Army at that time possessed only nine more field pieces than were used by General Longstreet and General Hill at the battle of Gettysburg half a century before.²⁹

Plattsburg, like the other military training camps, served a profound purpose. It helped to create a moral force within the country--a force represented by a rather powerful and effective military organization of civilians that was ready to meet an emergency for which no machinery of the government was available. Plattsburg did much to prepare the public mind for the Draft Act of 1917, and it secured publicity for and promoted generally the whole idea of preparedness.³⁰ It is of little surprise therefore that the apostle of American preparedness, Theodore Roosevelt, was invited to make an early appearance at Plattsburg.

The majority of the men in training there looked to the ex-President and to General Wood for leadership rather than to President Wilson and his administration. This was unfortunate, to be sure, but under the circumstances of the times, it was inevitable. These two men were the acknowledged prophets of the very thing which the trainees were so dedicated to--military preparation. Therefore, on the occasion

²⁸ Perry, Plattsburg, 27.

²⁹ Ibid., 43.

³⁰ Ibid., 242.

of the arrival of Theodore Roosevelt at Plattsburg, August 25, 1915, the sentiment of the camp was overwhelmingly ap- favorable to him.³¹

Besides the Colonel, there were numerous other distinguished personages who visited Plattsburg during the encampment. But the most important two who were invited felt compelled to decline their invitations. They were the President and the Secretary of War. Secretary Garrison, though refusing to appear at the camp, had strongly endorsed the work being accomplished there. President Wilson, likewise, in a letter to General Wood on August 16, 1915, expressed his approval. "I have followed as well as I could at a distance," he said, "what has been done at Plattsburg and have followed it with the greatest interest. I think all concerned ought to be congratulated upon the success of the experiment."

Despite these encouraging words, it was only a few days later that the Commander-in-Chief refused an invitation to speak at the camp. He insisted that anything he had to say on preparedness should be made to Congress and expressed the view that harm only could come to those indulging in the practice of making partisan use of the camp. This last expression was undoubtedly intended by him to serve as a warning to his adversary, Theodore Roosevelt, who was to speak within a few days at the training area.³² It is somewhat

³¹ Perry, Plattsburg, 46.

³² Baker, Wilson, VI, 13.

curious, therefore, that the United States Commander-in-Chief and his Secretary of War should refuse to express approval of "Plattsburg" by a personal visit when the camp and the movement represented had the tacit endorsement of the national administration.

On the evening of August 25, ex-President Roosevelt spoke to some twelve hundred trainees at Plattsburg. The greater part of his speech was devoted to an attack on hyphenated and "Chinified" Americanism. But it was his reference to foreign affairs that "threw the fat into the fire." "In international matters," he charged, "rules of morality should apply as well as in personal matters." As he was being applauded for this statement, he demanded of his listeners: "Don't! I do not want the applause of any man for that statement on international morality unless that man has a burning sense of shame that the United States has not stood up for Belgium." The reaction was a redoubled applause, enthusiasm which was heard in the nation's capital. By the Administration, this speech was considered to be highly political, but if the address itself was not enough to stir the President, another incident which immediately followed most certainly did. In an interview with the press as he awaited his train for New York City, and while enroute, Roosevelt made reference to Wilson's "too proud to fight" speech of May 10, 1915 (three months earlier following the Lusitania disaster). At the same time, he made sarcastic reference to the President's "elocutionary correspondence" in his three Lusitania notes to Germany. The

ex-President concluded the interview by making reference to the often-repeated statement that everyone should stand behind the President in times like these. "I heartily subscribe to this on condition, and only on condition," he asserted, "that it is followed by the statement 'so long as the President stands by the country.'"³³

The strange quirk of events surrounding the development of this whole episode was unfortunate. General Wood had carefully edited the Roosevelt speech, but the Colonel's secretary gave the newspapermen an unedited copy inadvertently.³⁴ These unedited, and unspoken, remarks were then amalgamated in the following day's press with the statements Roosevelt made directly to reporters (but not to the trainees) following his departure from Plattsburg. Thus it appeared in journalistic accounts that the ex-President was guilty of having incited American soldiers against their Commander-in-Chief.³⁵ This series of events created the explosive situation which caused one of America's greatest military leaders to receive a public reprimand. On the day following the Roosevelt appearance at the camp, Secretary of War Garrison sent the following telegram to General Wood:³⁶

³³ Baker, Wilson, VI, 44. tions as "buffoonery",³⁷ and he

³⁴ Roosevelt, Letters, VIII, 965n. not mentioned either the

³⁵ Perry, Plattsburg, 44. administration while at the camp.

³⁶ Ibid., 45. suggested that it was a confession of guilt on

³⁷ Mowry, Progressive Movement, 317.

I have just seen the reports in the newspapers of the speech made by ex-President Roosevelt at the Plattsburg camp. It is difficult to conceive of anything which could have a more detrimental effect upon the real value of the experiment than such an incident. This camp, held under government auspices, was successfully demonstrating many things of great moment. Its virtue consisted in the fact that it conveyed its own impressive lesson in its practical and successful operation and results. No opportunity should have been furnished to any one to present to the men any matter excepting that which was essential to the necessary training which they were to receive. Anything else could only have the effect of distracting attention from the real nature of the experiment, diverting consideration to issues which excite controversy, antagonism and ill-feeling, and thereby impairing, if not destroying what otherwise would have been so effective. There must not be any opportunity given at Plattsburg or any other similar camp for any such unfortunate consequences.

The Secretary apparently did not check the validity of the press releases on which he chose to base his disciplinary action. The above rebuke therefore was founded on the assumption that the ex-President's address to the trainees had been an attack on the Wilson Administration.

General Wood accepted this unusual discipline with soldierly obedience and forbearance. Seeing that the General would not give an explanation, Roosevelt took it upon himself to reply sharply to the Secretary's telegram through a statement in the New York Times, August 27, 1915. He referred to Garrison's actions as "buffoonery",³⁷ and he reminded the Secretary that he had not mentioned either the President or the national administration while at the camp. He further suggested that it was a confession of guilt on

³⁷ Mowry, Progressive Movement, 317.

the part of the Administration if it regarded his calling attention to thirteen months of inaction on national preparedness as an attack upon itself.³⁸ The ex-President admitted, however, that "to support the great immediate need of national preparedness is...by implication to condemn the Administration to whose supine action we owe our present utter unpreparedness."³⁹

Roosevelt felt indignant that his friend, General Wood, should be made to suffer for what he considered his own responsibility, and which was beyond the control of the General. "I am, of course, solely responsible for the whole speech," he reminded. "When, after three weeks' notice, the War Department made no objection to my visit to the camp, they were disqualified from criticizing General Wood because I went, and because he did not submit my speech to the Administration for approval."⁴⁰

Secretary of War Garrison, who only six months later was to resign from the Cabinet because of disillusionment and difference with Wilson on preparedness issues, has been credited by Ralph Barton Perry with a genuine desire to promote the cause of preparedness--despite his involvement in the Roosevelt-Plattsburg-Wood matter. Although it might appear that Garrison acted hastily in his rebuke of the General,

³⁸ Bishop, Roosevelt, 394.

³⁹ This statement was contained in Roosevelt's letter to Dr. Henry S. Drinker, President of Lehigh University, on September 1, 1915. Ibid., 396.

⁴⁰ Roosevelt, Letters, VIII, 965n.

CHAPTER V

THE LONELY VOICE

By 1914, conditions in Europe, a continent armed to the teeth, had made war inevitable. Whatever the reasons, war did come, as did the somewhat academic argument over its causes. On this side of the Atlantic, there were two definite schools of thought on this issue. The pacifists, as characterized by Secretary of State Bryan, contended that it was logical to believe we could stay out of war if we were unprepared--inasmuch as preparation for war is an incentive to war.¹ The counter opinion to that of the pacifists was held by those who could be considered as the disciples of preparedness. America's two foremost advocates of this theory were General Leonard Wood and Theodore Roosevelt. General Wood spoke well the thoughts of the proponents of a militarily prepared nation when, in his book Our Military History, he asserted: "We have no right to jeopardize all we have and hold most dear by failing to organize and prepare our strength because of the fear that if strong, organized and ready, our nation may become an international highwayman."² "If no serious resistance is possible on the part of one party to a dispute," he pointed out, "the temptation of the stronger and better prepared to use force is great; if the reverse is the case, consideration and a disposition

¹ Paxson, Pre-War Years, 131.

² Wood, Military History, 52.

Perry suggests this might well have been due to the Secretary's desire to prevent inflammatory utterances that could have brought the country into war before it was ready. He also may have desired to avoid popular agitation, hoping that the Administration, if left alone, would work out a satisfactory plan of its own without popular excitement and partisan censure.⁴¹

This incident at Plattsburg, without doubt, offered great opportunity and potential for a long-running political battle. However, despite Roosevelt's characteristic vitriolic attack upon the Secretary of War, the affair was soon closed after the latter had made a rejoinder to the Colonel's attack upon him.

Plattsburg had received and continued to receive much attention in the nation's press. This, combined with the personal influence exerted by the camp personnel, resulted in the Plattsburg Movement becoming "a megaphone through which...words of military wisdom penetrated to the uttermost ends of the land."⁴²

⁴¹ Perry, Plattsburg, 47. 131.

⁴² Ibid., 43. History, 52.

to arbitrate may be counted on."³ Wood cautioned that it isn't enough to be filled with the spirit of sacrifice and to have lofty ideals, for the strength of right must be organized against the day when it may be necessary to meet the force of wrong.⁴ He reminded that a war prepared for is often a war avoided,⁵ paraphrasing Washington's statement that "to be prepared for war is one of the most effectual means of preserving peace."⁶

At their adversaries, the supporters of preparedness charged that it was an insult to us as a people to have it assumed that we could not be strong and prepared to fight for the right without becoming likely to use our power for wrong.⁷ Furthermore, the professional pacifist, the advocate of unpreparedness and nonresistance, was seen as the most dangerous of our citizens. While being generally eminently respectable, the pacifist was charged with advocating a policy which would surely end in great and unnecessary loss of life, if not in the final loss of our national liberty. The adoption of the pacifist policy was viewed as the establishment of a condition which would prevent the country from effectively defending that which was right. Hence, it would assure the subordination of good to evil.⁸

³ Wood, Military History, 48.

⁴ Evan J. David, Leonard Wood on National Issues (Garden City, 1920), 125. This work hereafter cited as David, Wood.

⁵ Ibid., 130.

⁶ Wood, Military History, 48.

⁷ Ibid., 51.

⁸ Ibid., 184.

As a result of the warnings of the highly respected General Wood that our army was sorely inadequate in this time of crisis, and because of the subsequent alarm by many highly placed individuals especially in the East, the preparedness movement was born. It is said to have been crystallized by the National Security League--founded in December, 1914, by some 150 public leaders in New York City. This league was opposed by the pro-German element in the country, and, if not actually opposed by President Wilson, it found no co-operation or encouragement from his Administration.⁹ Needless to say, Theodore Roosevelt was the League's unabashed exponent, for almost simultaneously with its founding, the Colonel assumed the leadership of the movement for national preparedness.¹⁰

For those who remembered the pre-Cuban Roosevelt in his post as Assistant Secretary of the Navy, his obsession for positive action and military preparation in time of turmoil was not surprising.¹¹ On one occasion in 1898, while momentarily serving as Acting Navy Secretary, Roosevelt, considerably concerned over accumulating international storm clouds, used his authority to mobilize all units at Mare Island, California, buy thousands of tons

⁹ Seymour, Wilson and the War, 81.

¹⁰ Arthur S. Link, Woodrow Wilson and the Progressive Era, 177.

¹¹ McKinley, knowing of the closeness of the Roosevelt-Wood relationship and their strong views on preparedness, remarked facetiously to the General on one of his calls at the White House: "Well, have you and Theodore declared war yet?" David, Wood, 132.

of coal in the Far East for the fleet, and direct a concentration of U. S. ships in Asiatic waters under Admiral Dewey.¹²

Throughout 1915 and 1916, Roosevelt hammered on the subject of an adequate military preparedness program for the country. He bitterly opposed pacifists and others who believed our people could rely on treaties to preserve the peace. Furthermore, he saw preparedness as a means of insuring the continuance of our valued institutions, the protection of our liberty, and as the preventive for unnecessary loss of life in time of war.

As the former President engaged in his lonely campaign to get the country to rearm, he found himself tenaciously attacking the President, his Administration, the pacifists, pro-Germans, hyphenated groups which maintained a strong mother-country allegiance, and in fact most any group or person who opposed him or his program.

While the old Colonel was accused of using patriotism for selfish political reasons, there can be little doubt as to his emphatic views on preparedness. As a super-nationalist, he saw that his country could not hold its place in the world unless it stood ready to "guard its rights with an armed hand." In a letter to an acquaintance

he quoted from statements he had made 19 years earlier when Roosevelt, Letters, VIII, 1040. To Guy Emerson, Secretary of the Roosevelt Non-Partisan League, May 11, 1916.

¹² These actions by Roosevelt were lauded by Wood as wise and far-seeing, they being largely responsible for American control of the seas in the Far East and the subsequent Philippine victory in the Spanish-American War. David, Wood, 135.

in the Navy Department which indicated his long-continuing convictions on this subject. "Preparedness against war," he had asserted, "is the surest guarantee for peace...and a willful failure to prepare for danger may in its effects be as bad as cowardice." Reflecting on the then-current situation, Roosevelt adjudged it a crime against the nation and mankind that there had not been any vigorous preparation, militarily, socially, or industrially, in that hour of need.¹³

Roosevelt's campaign for preparedness involved four aspects. Besides (1) rearmament, he demanded (2) obligatory military service. He preached (3) Americanism, with a specific assault upon the "German-American Alliance." And he maintained (4) a steady assault upon the Administration for its policy of lethargy, especially regarding Belgium.¹⁴

The former President was accused by his adversaries of entertaining an unusual affinity for war. This lust for combat, they suggested, was the contributing factor toward his violent anti-pacifist position. But whether he was a warmonger or a peace-loving individual who sincerely believed in the sanctity of preparedness, Roosevelt was a rabid nationalist and a patriot--a patriot of the fire-eating variety. And he cared not to shield himself or his

¹³ Roosevelt, Letters, VIII, 1040. To Guy Emerson, Secretary of the Roosevelt Non-Partisan League, May 11, 1916.

¹⁴ Ibid., 1092. Contained in letter to John St. Loe Strachey, July 22, 1916.

¹⁶ White, Autobiography, 512.

family from their responsibilities to their country. Never did he want his own sons to be guilty of avoiding war service.¹⁵ As for himself, his experiences in Cuba and his tireless and persistent efforts to become a combat leader in the World War indicate his ready willingness to serve his country.

As the events of 1915 unfolded, the Roosevelt voice in the wilderness was no longer without its hearers, though the numbers were relatively few. Economics had come to have its effect upon American sympathies. After the Battle of the Marne that year, the Allies placed tremendous orders for war material with United States companies. Because of the superiority of the British fleet, the Germans had little success with trans-oceanic shipping, and hence the Allies became our best customers--our best friends. The swing by the mass of American opinion was away from a position of neutralism, or even pro-Germanism in many cases.¹⁶

Inasmuch as the powerful Roosevelt was already in the pro-Allied camp as an energetic participant, the newly developing sway in national sentiment was manna from heaven. And he took advantage of his opportunities. Old charges against Wilson, his administration, the pacifists, and the pro-Germans were reiterated, and new charges were formulated. Privately, Roosevelt had come to doubt the personal and

¹⁵ Buchanan, "Roosevelt and Neutrality," 781. Roosevelt's correspondence with General Pershing would seem to prove this point.

¹⁶ White, Autobiography, 512.

¹⁹ Wister, Friendship, 350-51. Letter dated July 7, 1915.

public honesty of the Administration's leaders, characterizing their policy as "dishonorable."¹⁷ They were guilty of timidity and folly, he said, and they had failed in their duty to their country. Furthermore, the Administration policy of neutrality was seen as a blind behind which it was attempting to aid the Central Powers. "With great dexterity and adroitness," Wilson and his crowd had done all possible, asserted the former President, "to influence American public opinion against the Allies and in favor of Germany."¹⁸

A letter which Roosevelt wrote to his very good friend Owen Wister was ample proof that his anger toward the President was as great, if not greater, than it was toward the Germans. He might have reasoned that the Kaiser was acting in behalf of his country's highest self-interest and hence could be condemned only as any much-respected opponent in war. However, the President of the United States was viewed in a different light. To Roosevelt, Wilson was not acting in the best interests of his country, and hence could not be respected either as an adversary or an ally. The Wister letter showed the contempt entertained for the Wilson policy by the Colonel, and it displayed his reasoning regarding the Administration policy pursued to that date, and his evaluation of the President's position as a leader of the American people:¹⁹

¹⁷ Roosevelt, Letters, VIII, 1013. Letter to Senator Lodge, February 4, 1916.

¹⁸ Mowry, Progressive Movement, 319. Letter dated July 7, 1915.

¹⁹ Wister, Friendship, 350-51. Letter dated July 7, 1915.

You say that it would have been an act of "unprecedented folly" if we had not been politically neutral. On the contrary, in my view, the really unprecedented folly was in exercising our loose tongues in a way thoroughly to irritate Germany and yet to do nothing whatever to back these aforesaid tongues by governmental action. If it was our duty to remain neutral politically, it was emphatically our duty to remain morally neutral. Any political neutrality not based on moral reasons is no more and no less admirable than the neutrality of Pontius Pilate or of the backwoodsman who saw his wife fighting the bear. Either The Hague Conventions meant something or they did not mean something.... If they meant nothing, then it was idiocy for us to have gone in to them. If they meant anything, Wilson and Bryan are not to be excused for failure to try to make them good by whatever action was necessary; and political neutrality when they were violated was a crime against the world and a thoroughly base and dishonourable thing on our part.... Of course, our people are now all confused and weakened and incapable of giving any coherent support to our own rights or the rights of others in the teeth of Germany's ruthless and cruel efficiency. This is directly due to the action of Wilson....

The Colonel continued his letter to Wister by drawing this interesting contrast between Wilson's actions and those of Lincoln:²⁰

[What] if, after the firing on Sumter, Lincoln had made a speech in which he said that the North was "too proud to fight," and if he had then spent sixty days in writing polished epistles to Jefferson Davis, and if Seward had resigned because these utterly futile epistles were not even more futile, why, by July the whole heart would have been out of the Union Party and most people in the North would have been following Horace Greeley in saying that the erring sisters should be permitted to depart in peace! I have a perfect horror of denunciation that ends in froth.... If Wilson is not wrong in his action or rather inaction, about the Lusitania and Belgium, then the wise and proper thing for our people is to keep their mouths shut about both deeds.

²⁰ Wister, Friendship, 350-51. Letter dated July 7, 1915.

²¹ "China's New Country," Outlook, CX (August 4, 1915), 774.

The loose tongue and the unready hand make a poor combination.... I don't think that the American people believe that he [Wilson] has misrepresented us! I think they are behind him. I think they are behind him largely because their leaders have felt that in this crisis the easy thing to do was to minister to our angered souls by words of frothy denunciation and minister to our soft bodies by taking precious good care that there was no chance of our having to turn these words into deeds.

From this letter it is clear that the old fighter was roundly scolding the President of the United States, and he was scolding his fellow Americans.

Words which had to be uttered at this time, according to the Outlook, were spoken by Roosevelt in a carefully prepared "non-political" address in San Francisco, August 4, 1915. The skillful coiner of phrases again did not disappoint his audience. He charged that the United States was being "Chinified"--it was permitting its sovereignty to be encroached upon as had the Chinese down through the centuries.²¹ This speech, coming in the aftermath of the Lusitania sinking, hit upon the people's consciousness that the Administration had played an equivocal game in dealing with the German Government in the matter of the rights of our citizens on the high seas. We had not stood up to the Kaiser in a positive manner, as we would have had Roosevelt been in the White House. We were compromising our stature as a free nation. To his California listeners Roosevelt was reproachful. He cited the belief of the pacifists that the country's honor could be main-

²¹ "Chinifying This Country," Outlook, CX (August 4, 1915), 774.

tained only by being unarmed; and he labelled it as false. He admitted that preparedness did not guarantee peace, but he contended it was the right position for a leading nation of the world to take. Preparedness would make a would-be aggressor hesitate. He warned that a self-respecting country could not be fat and flabby. Furthermore, he was convinced that a nation's "men who are not ready to fight for the right are not fit to live in a free democracy."²²

The former President took every opportunity during this period to strike a chord for "Americanism," and thereby lashed out at those he termed "hyphenates."²³ He resisted all efforts, even by those groups who were favorable to the Allies, to have him lend support to any hyphenated-American organization.²⁴ Colonel Roosevelt likewise gave his fellow countrymen, and the Germans, no rest on the submarine issue. Especially after the Imperial announcement of unrestricted sub warfare (outside specified shipping lanes),²⁵ his vexation was without limits, and he demanded a vigorous national policy to cope with the situation.²⁶

²² "Chinafying This Country," Outlook, CX (August 4, 1915), 774.

²³ By "hyphenates", Roosevelt was referring only to those persons who were acting in behalf of the interests of their mother country, not to the loyal foreign born. The actions of the hyphenates were definitely contrary to Roosevelt's policy of "straight U.S." Mowry, Progressive Movement, 316.

²⁴ Buchanan, "Roosevelt and Neutrality," 786.

²⁵ Announced on February 4, 1915.

²⁶ Buchanan, "Roosevelt and Neutrality," 781.

However irritated he might have been with the Germans, Roosevelt took what he considered to be a fair and objective position in their regard. He limited his criticism of them largely to two points: the killing of Americans on the high seas, and the subjugation of Belgium. Neither of these, he asserted, involved any "question of fact."²⁷

From these two points, Theodore Roosevelt's personal policy toward America and the war thus evolved. He appealed for justice to the small Belgian nation, and he demanded retaliation for the injury done to Americans by submarine sinkings. As a third element, the Colonel privately and personally sought to advise the Allied leaders to the extent of making their propaganda in the United States more effective.²⁸ These three things were pursued in order to steer Americans into the course of the Allies, which the ex-President believed to be the course of right.²⁹ So highly dedicated did he become to the cause of the Allies that he interpreted any help for the Germans as immoral, while any aid given to Britain and France was a "highly moral" act.³⁰

²⁷ Buchanan, "Roosevelt and Neutrality," 786.

²⁸ So dedicated was Roosevelt to the Allied cause that he went so far as to privately urge the British Government to recall the Ambassador to Washington because his interpretations of England's position to the American people were seen by the Colonel as being far too impartial. Mowry, Progressive Movement, 316.

²⁹ Buchanan, "Roosevelt and Neutrality," 790. (1915).

³⁰ Mowry, Progressive Movement, 316.

While keeping alert to the machinations of the wolves outside his door, President Wilson simultaneously had to wrestle with troubles within his own household. Secretary of State Bryan chose to resign,³¹ after a disagreement with the President over the second Lusitania note. By many observers, this action actually strengthened the domestic and international position of the Administration. The Outlook editorialized that the departure of Bryan averted the greatest of dangers to America--being false to our character, our traditions, and our ideals by putting peace above law, freedom, and righteousness. Describing Bryan's presence in the Cabinet as having been a "severe handicap," to the Outlook interpreted Wilson's acceptance of the Secretary's resignation as a rejection of the idea of "peace at any price." The President and his administration were now free to represent the true character of the country.³² Thus, by the evacuation of Secretary Bryan from the forefront of the political scene, President Wilson was relegated to the dubious position of Colonel Roosevelt's top whipping-boy.

Another casualty of the fracas over the Administration's policies was Secretary of War Lindley M. Garrison. Having indicated himself to be an ardent preparationist upon taking office in 1913, Garrison sought the counsel

³¹ June 8, 1915.

³² "The American Crisis," Outlook, CX (June 16, 1915), 341.

³⁶ Wister, Friendship, 355.

of General Leonard Wood and henceforth agitated for army reorganization and enlargement.³³ At the time when President Wilson made public his program on military preparedness, a disagreement arose between the Chief Executive and his Secretary over some of its features, especially the propagandizing of the proposals.³⁴ This Wilson-Garrison affair naturally created its political facets. The National Security League and such prominent Republican politicians as Lodge, Root, and Stimson had endorsed the reorganization plan Garrison submitted to the President. Representative James Hay, Chairman of the House Committee on Military Affairs, had been supporting a plan similar to the one enunciated by Wilson--which was considerably different from Garrison's. When the President chose not to support his Secretary's program and instead seemed in agreement with Hay, Garrison chose to resign from the Cabinet.³⁵ The Security League and the members of the Roosevelt school of preparedness teemed with contempt for the President. Wister charged the Chief Executive with having revoked the promises he had made to Garrison to push preparedness.³⁶ A man who at an earlier time had

³³ Bryan suggested this accusation was not totally valid. This was described by Baker as a common excited attitude by new Secretaries of War. Baker, Wilson, VI, 2.

³⁴ Ibid., 18.

³⁵ February 10, 1916. Several reasons have been suggested for Wilson's actions in this matter, one being that Hay more nearly represented existing public opinion. Another is that Wilson may have hoped to get greater Congressional support by endorsing a legislator's plan.

³⁶ Wister, Friendship, 355. *Outlook*, CX (August 4, 1915).

professed to be a pacifist was chosen to succeed Garrison. He, Newton D. Baker, had said he was opposed to the agitation for preparedness--it being a movement based on hysteria and amounting to nothing more than a manufactured war scare.³⁷

It appeared that the new Secretary of War could be nothing but anathema to the preparedness proponents. Fears were somewhat allayed, however, when upon taking office Baker announced that his policy would be one of "peace, preparedness, and silence."³⁸ At least the word "preparedness" appeared in his vocabulary. Editorializing, the New York Times regarded him as fitted for the job, especially in view of his "talent for detail," and it recognized that he had an established reputation for "hard and systematic work." The Times praised him for being a consistent supporter of the President, both in military and in foreign matters.³⁹

What was the nature of the Wilson policy as these developments within the Administration were occurring? The President was consistently accused by Theodore Roosevelt of being controlled by the pacifists.⁴⁰ But his split with Bryan suggested this accusation was not totally valid. Wilson seemed to favor a very slow conversion to a preparedness policy, probably hoping that by such action the

³⁷ New York Times, editorial, March 7, 1916, 10:3.

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ "Chinafying This Country," Outlook, CX (August 4, 1915), 774.

sincerity of his neutrality would not be shattered.⁴¹ This gradual method of military and naval build-up likewise was favored by the President so as to assure himself of the people's confidence and thereby gain greater support in Congress.⁴²

There did appear to be order and system in Wilson's slowly developing military preparation program, though it was not recognized by his enemies. The movement in the direction of preparedness by the Administration had actually begun in July, 1915, after the dispatch of the third Lusitania note. At that time, the Chief Executive called upon his War and Navy Secretaries to draw up programs for the development and the equipment of the two armed services.⁴³ But this action was not to be taken as evidence that the President had abandoned his previously established position of neutrality. Even after the Arabic was sunk on August 19, 1915, with a loss of American lives (only three months after the Lusitania disaster), Wilson still took the stand that the people were counting on him to keep them out of war. Moreover, he considered it nothing less than a calamity for the United States to get drawn into the conflict and hence become deprived of our disinterested influence in the peace settlement.⁴⁴

⁴¹ White, Autobiography, 508.

⁴² Baker, Wilson, VI, 18.

⁴³ Ibid., 8.

⁴⁴ Ibid., 373.

⁴⁷ Ibid., 375.

Ray Stannard Baker, Wilson's personal biographer, states that by July, 1915, the President was convinced of the need for positive action--based on the accumulated evidence of German bad faith and misdeeds.⁴⁵ He was becoming more and more irritated with the Kaiser's government and especially with the German Ambassador to Washington, Count Bernstorff. If President Wilson was dedicated to a more assertive policy, however, his critic Roosevelt was not aware of it, for in the aftermath of the Arabic tragedy the Colonel charged that the time for words had now passed. And even Wilson admitted that his biggest puzzle was to determine "when patience ceases to be a virtue."⁴⁶

During the fall of 1915, the President apparently became more certain of his convictions. Completely distrusting the Germans by now, he asserted that "no decent man, knowing the situation" could be anything but "heart and soul for the Allies." But he recognized that many Americans did not share his opinion, and he remarked that he was not justified in forcing his personal opinion upon them. Thus his purposes remained the same, though he interestingly maintained that "we are not trying to keep out of trouble; we are trying to preserve the foundations upon which peace can be restored."⁴⁷

The Administration's preparedness program, which was presented to Congress in December of 1915, was first

⁴⁵ Baker, Wilson, VI, 8. harshly, there was one who was

⁴⁶ Ibid., 373. President sought ever so diligently to win

⁴⁷ Ibid., 375. the idea of preparedness. Buchanan, "Roosevelt

made public by the President in early November at a New York City function. Characteristically enough, it brought criticism from both the Roosevelt and the Bryan forces,⁴⁸ as well as from numerous other sources.⁴⁹ Roosevelt's first reaction was reflected in his letter to John Carter Rose in which he proclaimed that "Wilson is now following afar off in the paths of preparedness and of Americanization which I blazed for him over a year ago...."⁵⁰ While this comment to Rose carries connotations of praise for the Chief Executive, on the same day in a statement to the New York Times Roosevelt labelled the proposed military preparation legislation as a "shadow program." One week later, a published interview in the Chicago Daily News quoted the Colonel as saying Wilson's "half preparedness" was as dangerous as the schemes of Bryan and Henry Ford.⁵¹ Then in January (1916), while writing his old colleague Senator Lodge, Roosevelt described

⁴⁸ Baker, Wilson, VI, 18. Curiously, these two prominent

⁴⁹ These included the militarists in Congress who wanted a more vigorous program than Wilson requested, those who advocated a fleet second to none, anti-preparationists as exemplified by Henry Ford and Congressmen who feared their fate in the coming elections, and the important Chairman of the House Committee on Military Affairs, Congressman James Hay of Virginia. Ibid., 25-26. and the criminality of unpreparedness.

⁵⁰ Roosevelt, Letters, VIII, 978. Letter to John Carter Rose, November 12, 1915. 1006. Roosevelt to Lodge, January 26, 1916.

⁵¹ The Times and News as reviewed by Baker, Wilson, VI, 18. A corollary of Roosevelt's support of preparedness was his detestation of those who called themselves pacifists. It is interesting to note that although he dealt with such adversaries very harshly, there was one who was not subjected to the Colonel's wrath--Henry Ford, whom the former President sought ever so diligently to win over to the idea of preparedness. Buchanan, "Roosevelt

the Administration's plan as "all nonsense," it being a program of "one-twentieth measures."⁵² In a subsequent letter to the Senator, Roosevelt made further evaluations by charging that Wilson's navy program was all wrong and his army reorganization proposal 95% wrong. In further discourse on his favorite subject, the former President commented:⁵³

Of course, the fundamental fact is that the real foes of preparedness in this country are its make-believe friends who are for...a tenth measure of preparedness, of sham preparedness.⁵⁴ Bryan is not the real foe.... It is Wilson who is the real danger. Uncle Sam is associated in the world with nations armed with high-powered rifles. Bryan says the U. S. should have no rifles at all, while Wilson disagrees, saying the U. S. should be armed--with a muzzle-loading flintrock musket.

It was obvious thus that President Wilson's new slant on preparedness brought no abatement in his antagonists' attacks upon him. Though the Chief Executive

and Neutrality," 784. Curiously, these two prominent Americans, Roosevelt and Ford, battled each other indirectly through newspaper advertisements, which expounded the virtues of the cause for which each was fighting. In answer to a pacifistic appeal in the New York Times sponsored and signed by Ford, the American Defense Society, with Roosevelt on its advisory board, called attention in a half-page ad to the need for military preparation, the values of preparedness, and the criminality of unpreparedness. New York Times, advertisement, February 24, 1916, 7:1.

⁵² Roosevelt, Letters, VIII, 1006. Roosevelt to Lodge, January 26, 1916.

⁵³ Ibid., 1012. Roosevelt to Lodge, February 4, 1916.

⁵⁴ This was obviously a dig at many of his old Republican and Progressive colleagues who were supporting Wilson's program.

was moving in the general direction as advocated by Roosevelt, this development found little favor with the latter. Roosevelt interpreted Wilson's belated change of attitude toward preparedness had been and still remained himself, while in Wilson, the Colonel saw a depiction of pseudo-preparedness.⁵⁵ The fact that the President took a mid-winter tour of the country to get the public oriented on his preparedness program before Congressional opposition could solidify,⁵⁶ did not convince critics of his dedication to such a program. This trip with its inevitable dramatization was scored as politics, it being viewed as deceptive preparation for the forthcoming presidential election.⁵⁷

In the eyes of Roosevelt, the President was capable--and undoubtedly guilty--of far more than deception. He blasted him for wishy-washy conduct and procrastination. "He has not got a conviction in the world," Roosevelt wrote Governor Hiram Johnson of California. For the purposes of re-election, Wilson "does not mind turning back and forth on any subject," asserted the Colonel.⁵⁸ As many writers

⁵⁵ Buchanan, "Roosevelt and Neutrality," 784.

⁵⁶ Upon his return, it is reported that there was no perceptible flow of Congressional opinion, despite worsening conditions in Europe. This, it is suggested, reflected the people's disillusion and doubt. Baker, Wilson, VI, 39.

⁵⁷ Ibid., 40.

⁵⁸ Roosevelt, Letters, VIII, 1026. Roosevelt to Johnson, April 3, 1916.

on the subject emphasize, Wilson sought to follow rather than to guide public opinion. This, for the most part, was undoubtedly true. Therefore, it is likely that the shiftings and sways in the presidential position, which were subsequent to fluctuations in the national sentiment, were interpreted by Roosevelt as showing lack of conviction on the part of Wilson. Whether this synthesis be true would be dependent upon the view taken of the presidential responsibilities (i.e. as to whether the President's duty is to follow public opinion or to help shape it). To those of the Roosevelt, in pursuing his campaign for more adequate preparation, found other adjectives with which to label the President. Describing the Chief Executive again as the real enemy of the country, Roosevelt characterized him as a "demagogue, adroit, tricky, false, without one spark of loftiness in him, without a touch of the heroic in his cold, selfish and timid soul."⁵⁹

It is true that the Colonel's bitter charges against Wilson got only limited acceptance from the people. However, they eventually began to make their desired dent. Especially when Roosevelt accused Wilson of using weasel words⁶⁰ did his denunciation fall on attentive ears. Such words were exemplified by those in the President's request for "universal voluntary training." On this point of Wilson's

⁵⁹ Wister, Friendship, 355. Roosevelt letter to Owen Wister, February 5, 1916.

⁶⁰ Weasel words were defined by Roosevelt as words "whose meaning is sucked dry by the word next to it," yet appearing to have meaning in it. Wister, Friendship, 354.

⁶¹ Wood, Military History, 19.

military preparedness program, Roosevelt was quite rabid. For the Chief Executive to ask for "universal voluntary training" motivated "only" by the "compulsion of the spirit of Americanism" was described by the Colonel as being analagous to a truant law for school boys which required attendance for all who did not wish to stay away from school.⁶¹ But again, this was a point on which the President undoubtedly sought to adhere because he believed it to be the opinion of the people--a dedication to the long American tradition of voluntary military service. To those of the Roosevelt-Wood school, such a policy was not only defective, weak, and unreliable, but it was also dangerous.⁶²

All in all, if Theodore Roosevelt had many supporters for his theories on preparedness, he found few sympathizers for his extreme views on President Wilson. His existence at Sagamore Hill was punctuated by days of loneliness and low spirits. The paths which had been beaten to his door for almost a decade by eminent political leaders were about to become obliterated by overgrowth. However, for those who continued to look to Oyster Bay as the zion of patriotic and political enlightenment, the hospitality extended to them there was as generous as always, if not more so. Those who partook of the atmosphere of buffalo heads and stuffed monkeys were, in most cases, persons who echoed the old Rough Rider in his views on national issues --people who shared his prejudices and hatreds. More than ever, Roosevelt valued and nurtured his friendships.

⁶¹ Wister, Friendship, 354.

⁶² Wood, Military History, 19.

A letter the Colonel wrote to Owen Wister is representative of many he posted to his trusted friends during this period when he realized his voice was like that of a hermit, sequestered and with only limited effect.⁶³ "Your attitude during the last few years, both to me personally and especially as regards the politics of this country, has been a very great comfort," Roosevelt said to Wister with gratification. "This is especially so in view of the complete breakdown of the men who ought to be our intellectual leaders," he concluded.⁶⁴ On another occasion he wrote Wister lauding that friend's castigation of Wilson. "The people will in the end be glad," the Colonel scribbled praisefully, "that the foremost American man of letters speaks of the Buchanan of our day as it is right to speak."⁶⁵ Such letters as these can perhaps be taken as exhibits to prove the sincere dedication which Roosevelt had for what seemed to be his losing cause. They indicate the state of despair which engulfed him. Certainly a man gifted with rash political opportunism, of which Roosevelt was accused, would have sought a more pleasant, a more popular course of action. "I sound," he told Lodge, but he felt convinced that "they are bad tactics from the standpoint of the country." Under these conditions, the Colonel felt com-

⁶³ This period, roughly speaking, was between mid-1914 and the early part of 1917. *ib* conditions, he would

⁶⁴ Wister, *Friendship*, 359. Roosevelt to Wister, September 28, 1916.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 355. Roosevelt to Wister, April 11, 1916

The mid-war presidential election was near at hand, before the Republicans found it within themselves to seriously criticize the President. For almost two years, Theodore Roosevelt was the single voice of stature to find some fault with the manner in which Wilson was pursuing the problems of preparedness and international relations. The ex-President had been sorely chagrined by the "me-tooism" which had been innate in the attitudes and positions of many of his former political associates in the Republican and Progressive ranks. The Republicans felt that to oppose the President's neutralist position would bring to them the label of "War Party", while the Progressives feared that any action toward a more active military program would sap governmental and public interest from their liberal domestic plans. This may very well have been true. To Senator Lodge, Roosevelt wrote disparagingly of the G.O.P. attempt to "replace Wilson with a Republican" by capturing the German and other major voting blocs--through the adoption of the "me too" policy toward Wilson's preparedness program. "Such tactics may be politically sound," he told Lodge, but he felt convinced that "they are bad tactics from the standpoint of the country." Under these conditions, the Colonel felt compelled to say that he was indifferent as to whether Wilson was replaced or not. Under such conditions, he would emphatically not support the Republicans, preferring to

67 *Ibid.*, 1005n.

68 Baker, *Wilson*, VI, 233.

"merely vote in the air." Republican tactics such as these, he ventured to predict, would lead the Progressives into the Wilson camp.⁶⁶

Perhaps such remarks as these by Roosevelt had some effect upon the Republican leadership, for on February 15, 1916, a powerful speech by Elihu Root brought the Wilson-Republican honeymoon into a definite decline.⁶⁷ From the date of Root's strong words of condemnation for the Wilson Administration, the Republicans went over to the attack.⁷⁰ For the first time since the outbreak of the war, they criticized Wilson's handling of military preparation and international diplomacy.⁶⁷

Ray Stannard Baker suggests that Roosevelt's words and deeds of the early months of 1916 might have been motivated by political ambitions. This may very well have been true inasmuch as the Colonel's hat was said to have been placed in the presidential ring on March 9th. On that date, he is quoted as saying: "Nothing is to be hoped from the present administration." He went on to point out that he would however refuse to "enter into any fight" for the nomination⁶⁸ --implying that a change needed to be made,⁷¹ at the White House and that he would accept nomination for the job provided he were the overwhelming choice of the Republicans. Nevertheless, whatever his inner convictions

⁶⁶ Roosevelt, Letters, VIII, 1005. Roosevelt to Lodge, January 26, 1916.

⁶⁷ Ibid., 1005n.

⁶⁸ Baker, Wilson, VI, 233.

may have been, it was evident from his words that Roosevelt believed himself to be not only the outstanding proponent of preparedness but also the potential leader of the nation's opinion.⁶⁹ "The slumbering patriotism of our people must be waked and translated into concrete and efficient action," asserted the patriot of all patriots, who charged that many of the country's troubles were the "direct result of our utter failure to prepare and of our Governmental policy of almost unbelievable timidity and vacillation."⁷⁰ In fact, the Roosevelt was convinced that Wilson wanted the people to believe that the alternative policies on preparedness were two--the Administration plan and Bryan's--which left a choice between doing a half-way job or doing nothing at all. By following the first plan, Wilson would thus get credit from the public for taking positive action. In the mind of Roosevelt, this was a typical Wilsonian maneuver to persuade the people that something real had been done when it actually hadn't. The Administration's military program was viewed as a "make-shift" affair and the President was tagged by this prolific phrase-maker as the "non-partisan hero", the champion of American self-defense,⁷¹

⁶⁹ As contrasted with the apparent Wilson policy of following, not leading, public opinion.

⁷⁰ Roosevelt, Letters, VIII, 1041. Roosevelt to banker Guy Emerson, May 11, 1916.

⁷¹ Ibid. The term "champion of American self-defense" applied here to Wilson is interpreted as carrying an undesirable connotation, Roosevelt intending to accuse Wilson of weakness and the lack of courage to aggressively fight for what is morally right.

and as a "damned Presbyterian hypocrite."⁷²

While Theodore Roosevelt struck viciously at Wilson and his policies, there were others who were also objects of the Colonel's vitriol. Such persons as the editors of the New Republic, the Springfield Republican, the Atlantic Monthly, and The Evening Post as well as President Eliot of Harvard were chastised for the responsibility they shared in giving President Wilson such a strong position with the people. He suggested that they were responsible for the fact that "respectable men are absolutely indifferent to Wilson's lying on every subject and contradicting himself on every issue."⁷³ Owen Wister echoed these sentiments, after having gathered facts covering Wilson's conduct of foreign and domestic policy. The facts revealed a pattern, contended Wister, and "the pattern showed that the President's steps continually cancelled each other...."⁷⁴

There is no question that the fiery Roosevelt enjoyed the exercise of his passions against those with whom he violently disagreed, especially over matters of government and politics. He writhed at Wilson almost continuously, and simultaneously he held in great contempt those who worshipfully followed this man, this "cold-blooded politician." Even for such former loyal supporters of

⁷² Eric F. Goldman, Rendezvous With Destiny (New York, 1953), 243. Hereafter cited as Goldman, Rendezvous.

⁷³ Wister, Friendship, 360.

⁷⁴ Ibid., 361.

⁷⁸ Baker, Wilson, VI, 18.

his as Jane Addams, who now whole-heartedly endorsed Wilson, Roosevelt coined malevolent phrases. She, in his terminology, had become "poor bleeding Jane Addams" and a "Bull Mouse".⁷⁵ That Wilson and all about him became an obsession with Roosevelt, there can be no doubt. This pungent anecdote reflects the frustration and vexation which dominated the Colonel: "I consider Wilson next to Christ," said one of the President's benevolent supporters. "So was Judas Iscariot," Roosevelt is said to have retorted.⁷⁶

The American people, remembering the Roosevelt lacerations of political enemies in the somewhat recent past, demonstrated a tempered reaction toward the Colonel's ravings. This was a comforting factor for President Wilson, for he knew that his critic was quite vulnerable to the charge of being an "habitual scold" and of advocating preparedness merely for political objectives.⁷⁷ While his teeth-clicking attacks were inclined to defeat themselves by their violence, it could not be said, however, that Roosevelt was ineffective.

Baker contended that Roosevelt's diatribes brought no anxiety to the President.⁷⁸ Whether they did or not, the professorial President continued in his way of attempting to win supporters and influence politicians with sound argument and reason. During the bitter struggle

⁷⁵ Goldman, Rendezvous, 245.

⁷⁶ Wister, Friendship, 362. The Times of December 7,

⁷⁷ Sullivan, Over Here, 202.

⁷⁸ Baker, Wilson, VI, 18. Neutrality, " 775.

over preparedness, it is said that he never uttered or wrote a single word of personal attack or personal criticism of Roosevelt or of any of his other antagonists.⁷⁹

The New York Times, favorably inclined toward the Wilson Administration, admonished the former President for his rantings against a well-meaning Chief Executive:⁸⁰

Scanning the gall and vinegar of his adjectives, hearing that curious staccato of impetuous speech, the indulgent critic can only take refuge in the theory of the Everlasting Juvenile, the boy who has never grown up, as Dr. Eliot said of him. As Mrs. Berry in "The Ordeal of Richard Feverel" remarked delightedly of Dick's baby: "Ain't he got passion? Ain't he a splendid roarer?"

While Baker minimized the Wilson concern over Roosevelt's attacks, Buchanan pointed out that the Colonel's opinions were significant, that he came to have tremendous influence with his fellow countrymen. While he held absolutely no weight with the Administration, the Roosevelt opinions and suggestions expressed to Allied capitals are said to have had a positive, though indirect, influence upon American public opinion--through Allied propaganda.⁸¹

Since the early portions of the European war, Theodore Roosevelt had been convinced that the United States had a de facto involvement in the conflict, though not a physical one. That we were morally bound to the Allied side and yet did nothing materially to aid those who were

⁷⁹ Baker, Wilson, VI, 25.

⁸⁰ As quoted by Baker from the Times of December 7, 1915. Ibid., 18.

⁸¹ Buchanan, "Roosevelt and Neutrality," 775.

seen as fighting our cause was a fact that caused this highly patriotic American to act as he did. He recognized his position as a highly controversial national figure and he was fully aware of the criticism of him. This awareness was revealed in a letter he wrote to John St. Loe Strachey. His country finally approaching the brink of involvement, Roosevelt interestingly gave this old friend a personal evaluation of his extensive efforts to have this country fight for international morality.

"There has been one very curious feature in my experiences of the last two years," the former President remarked to Strachey. "I was attacking my own fellow countrymen, and pointing out their errors and shortcomings unsparingly, and I neither expected nor received sweeping support here at home; and although I think I can say that my fight with the black flag hoisted, did literally hammer conviction into the minds of a good many millions of people; and toward the end I secured a very considerable following for the causes I was championing." Roosevelt went on to attack the British press for supporting Wilson as against one (himself) who worked for all the British stood for, reminding that it was he himself who was the one "fighting the battle of the Allies" while Wilson "seemed to have fooled the [British] people about as successfully as he has fooled them on this side of the water...." To Strachey, the Colonel noted the fact that various Englishmen, as well as Americans,

82 Theodore Roosevelt, *Fear God and Take Your Own Part*
 83 Roosevelt, *Letters*, VIII, 1092. Roosevelt to John St. Loe Strachey, July 22, 1916.

had tagged his publication Fear God and Take Your Own Part⁸² as an electioneering pamphlet, and he observed that actions by many British elements had hurt the Allied position in this country, surmising it to be true that "the English can be trusted to stand by only the people who are against them." Roosevelt, in his concluding remarks to this friend, emphasized that "what I have done has been done solely from the standpoint of the honor and interest of my own country, and what I believe to be the duty of that country in the face of mankind."⁸³

Events that unfolded during the next few months were to bring the United States into the war--a war Theodore Roosevelt would have had his country enter at least two years earlier. The Colonel consulted with his admirers and cohorts in the planning and organization of the volunteer division. In various parts of the country, these aides spread news of the venture and sought to recruit the very best possible personnel for the proposed organization. The response was overwhelming. Tens of thousands of adventurous youths pleaded for a chance to enlist under the Colonel. At the peak, two thousand applications per day were being received, and in the end he was ready to submit the names of 250,000

⁸² Theodore Roosevelt, Fear God and Take Your Own Part (New York, 1916). This book was based on and consisted largely of articles he had written for the Metropolitan magazine during the previous 14 months.

⁸³ Roosevelt, Letters, VIII, 1092. Roosevelt to John St. Loe Strachey, July 22, 1916.

² Ibid., 496.

CHAPTER VI

THE ROOSEVELT DIVISION

As early as the autumn of 1914, the ex-President was developing ideas for the establishment of a "Roosevelt Division," in the event that the United States should become engaged in the war which had recently engulfed Europe. Within the ensuing months, his dream began to assume a more realistic nature when he started drawing up lists of those whom he would like to have included in his division. Among those listed were young army officers who had come to his attention, older officers who were friends from Spanish-American War days, and young civilians who were eager to serve as privates under the colorful Rough Rider.¹ The Colonel consulted with his admirers and cohorts in the planning and organization of the volunteer division. In various parts of the country, these aides spread news of the venture and sought to recruit the very best possible personnel for the proposed organization. The response was overwhelming. Tens of thousands of adventurous youths pleaded for a chance to enlist under the Colonel. At the peak, two thousand applications per day were being received, and in the end he was ready to submit the names of 250,000 men as recruits for his division.²

When the United States eventually did become engaged in the European War, Roosevelt was prepared to raise not one

¹ Sullivan, Over Here, 493.

² Ibid., 496.

division but perhaps as many as four.³ He, like most everyone else, realized that the country would not immediately be able to send a large army to the battlefront, but he saw the utility of a symbol-force.⁴ Roosevelt knew that he could have his volunteers trained and in the trenches months before the draft army could be ready, in fact, he expected that his unit would be combat-ready by the date that the Secretary of War had set for the beginning of the assembling of the draft army (September, 1917).⁵ The "Roosevelt Division" had become a reality. All it lacked was the authority to exist.⁶ While the ex-President never seemed absolutely confident that he would be given permission to mobilize his organization, he worked energetically toward that end. The fact that he had hurled quantities of severe charges at the Army's Commander-in-Chief did not seem to deter nor discourage him in his optimism and zeal. Likewise, it did not seem to occur to Roosevelt that it might not be practicable for a President to send an ex-President, especially of another party, to France.⁷

On February 2, 1917, the day that diplomatic relations were severed with Germany, Roosevelt wrote a letter

³ Hermann Hagedorn, The Roosevelt Family of Sagamore Hill (New York, 1954), 363. This work is hereafter cited as Hagedorn, Sagamore Hill.

⁴ Paxson, Pre-War Years, 413.

⁵ Hagedorn, Sagamore Hill, 366.

⁶ Sullivan, Over Here, 493.

⁷ Ibid.

to Secretary of War Baker. "I have already on file in your Department," he pointed out, "my application to be permitted to raise a Division of Infantry. If you believe there will be war and a call for volunteers, I respectfully and earnestly request that you notify me at once. I have prepared the skeleton outline of what I have desired the Division to be."⁸

To this communication, Roosevelt received a cool reply. "No situation has arisen," stated Baker; "your letter will be filed for consideration should occasion arise."¹² As if to ignore the wet blanket technique employed by Baker, Roosevelt wrote him again without delay: "In the event of being allowed to raise a division, I should, of course, strain every nerve to have it ready for efficient action at the earliest moment." This time, the Secretary was more specific as he wrote: "In reply to your patriotic suggestion, I have to state the limitations of the War Department. No action in the direction suggested by you can be taken without the express sanction of Congress."⁹

Though this last Baker letter was far from encouraging, it nevertheless did contain an element which promised some hope, i.e. in regard to the sanction of Congress. With that body then adjourned, however, there was nothing that could be done at the time. The Colonel contained himself for a month. Then he wired Baker that if the War Department

⁸ Sullivan, Over Here, 494. March 19, 1917.

⁹ Ibid., 493. Over Here, 495.

¹² Source Unavailable

¹³ Sullivan, Over Here, 495.

would merely furnish him arms and supplies, he himself would raise the rest of the money until some action was taken by Congress.¹⁰ In the meantime, he would be able to give his

division six weeks' preliminary training at Fort Sill, Oklahoma.¹¹ This suggestion by Roosevelt would seem to

negate any suggestion that he was not dead serious about his plan. Thought it was not widely known, he also told

the French Ambassador Jusserand that he would lead an American division to France if the French would pay for it.¹²

To this latest Roosevelt proposal, there again came a disappointing reply. Baker contended that he lacked

authority to grant the Colonel's wishes. Moreover, the

Secretary stated that "general officers for all volunteer forces are to be drawn from the Regular Army." This was

a direct slap at the old Rough Rider who had anticipated going to France as a brigadier general, and it did not go

without an appropriate Roosevelt answer. "I wish respect-

fully to point out," he reminded Baker, "that I am a retired

Commander-in-Chief of the United States Army and eligible

to any position of command over American troops to which I

may be appointed...." The Secretary replied: "The patriotic spirit of your suggestion is cordially appreciated."¹³

Seeing that correspondence was getting him nowhere, the ex-President chose a new channel of action. He went to

¹⁰ This telegram was dated March 19, 1917.

¹¹ Sullivan, Over Here, 495.

¹² Source Unavailable, 496.

¹³ Sullivan, Over Here, 495.

Washington for a visit at the home of his daughter, Mrs. Nicholas Longworth. While there, the Secretary of War called on Roosevelt and they were afforded an opportunity for private conversation. Still the Colonel got no satisfaction from his demands that the volunteer division be activated. There was yet one alternative--an appeal to the President. "I am going to tell Wilson," he confided to a friend, "that if he will give me this division, I will give him my promise never to oppose him politically in any way whatsoever." "I will promise Wilson that if he will send me to France, I will not come home alive." This latter statement apparently made reference to Wilson's presumed political jealousy of Roosevelt.¹⁴

On April 2, 1917, President Wilson addressed a joint session of Congress and requested that body to declare war against Germany. The Colonel on that day was on his way from Florida to New York, and he chose this opportunity to kill two birds with one stone. While passing through Washington, he called at the White House to congratulate the President on his Congressional message and to discuss plans for the volunteer division. The two did not meet, however, because Wilson was holding a cabinet meeting, but that evening, Roosevelt issued a public statement regarding his reaction to the President's message. In its conclusion, the Colonel expressed the very earnest hope that he would be allowed "to raise a division for immediate service at the front."¹⁵

¹⁴ Sullivan, Over Here, 496.

¹⁵ Bishop, Roosevelt, 423.

As if to prepare the President for his second visit to the White House four days later, Roosevelt, on April 5th, said in a published statement: "The American people believe that we owe it to ourselves and to the national honor to send a fighting force of at least an army corps under the American flag to the front at the earliest moment.... I have asked permission to raise a division which would be in this army and under its commander."¹⁶

On April 9th Roosevelt made a trip to Washington specifically to see the President. His secondary objective was to confer with his friends in Congress in support of the President's draft bill. The meeting at the White House was described as characterized by conversation on the level of superficial affability.¹⁷ The President seemed pleased that his adversary was supporting his draft bill, seeking action "supplementary to it, and not contradictory to it." And, on this occasion, Wilson chose to defend his past conduct. He said that he had felt for a long time the things he said in his speech to Congress, but that the American people were not awake to the need--hence he had to bide his time. When Wilson suggested that many people had misunderstood him, Roosevelt, in substance, said: "Mr. President, what I have said and thought, and what others have said and thought, is all dust in a windy street, if now we can make your message good. Of course, it amounts to nothing, if we cannot make it good.... Now, all that I

¹⁶ Bishop, Roosevelt, 423.

¹⁷ Sullivan, Over Here, 496.

ask is that I be allowed to do all that is in me to help make good this speech of yours--to help get the nation to act, so as to justify and live up to the speech, and the declaration of war that followed."¹⁸

Roosevelt found that Wilson had not understood his request concerning the division, and the former reportedly described the plan at length to the Chief Executive.¹⁹ It had not been apparent to the President that the division was to be raised exclusively among men who would not be taken under the conscription system.²⁰ Having thus cleared up this point and eliminated the conflict between the volunteer and conscriptive systems, the Colonel seemed to entertain some optimism regarding his chances.

Following his White House visit, Roosevelt told reporters and others that the President had received him with the utmost courtesy and consideration,²¹ that he had had a "plain talk" with the President,²² and that they had parted with friendly salutations. But the Colonel could not fail to show his usual chagrin at Wilson. "He promised me nothing definitely" he admitted. "If I talked to another man as he talked to me, it would mean that that man was going to get permission to fight. But I was talking to Mr. Wilson. His words may mean much, they may mean little."²³

¹⁸ Hagedorn, Sagamore Hill, 363.

¹⁹ Sullivan, Over Here, 496.

²⁰ Bishop, Roosevelt, 424.

²¹ Ibid.

²² Hagedorn, Sagamore Hill, 363.

²³ Sullivan, Over Here, 496.

There is little record in this connection of President Wilson's reaction to his conversation with the Colonel. Following Roosevelt's departure from the White House, Wilson is reported to have said to his secretary, Joseph Tumulty: "Roosevelt is a big boy. There is a sweetness about him that is very compelling. I can easily understand why his followers are so fond of him."²⁴ According to Tumulty, Wilson was sentimentally inclined to make an exception for Roosevelt's division, even though Administration policy was against such organizations. But because the President deferred to the wishes of his Secretary of War, the Colonel's requested favor was disallowed.²⁵

By his succeeding actions, Roosevelt indicated that he had little faith that his ambitions would be fulfilled. He did not hesitate to speak and write frankly of his opinions. He bombarded Secretary Baker with the written word, sending him one letter that covered eighteen typewritten pages.²⁶ Writing to a friend, Roosevelt charged that the Administration was "playing the dirtiest and smallest politics." "I don't think," he admitted, "they have the slightest intention of letting me go."²⁷ On May 11, Baker sent to the Colonel the final refusal. But the old Rough Rider had one more card to play.

²⁴ Frederick Palmer, Newton D. Baker (2 vols., New York, 1931), I, 199. This work is hereafter cited as Palmer, Baker.

²⁵ Ibid., 203.

²⁶ Sullivan, Over Here, 496.

²⁷ Ibid., 497.

Roosevelt decided to appeal to the legislative branch, going over the heads of the executive. Seeming to comply with Baker's suggestion that he lacked authority to grant Roosevelt's request, an appeal was placed before his friends on Capitol Hill. Through them, Roosevelt asked the Congress to enact an amendment to the pending draft legislation authorizing the President, at his discretion, to raise four divisions of volunteers. In the course of the debate in the Senate over this amendment, Roosevelt was bitterly attacked as a "self-seeker" and "political opportunist". He was as bitterly defended. Senator Hiram Johnson asserted to his colleagues: "Today, you have adopted his preparedness plan! Today, his undiluted Americanism that he preached to many, but to which few listened, has become the slogan of the nation. My God! when was it that a nation denied to its sons the right to fight in its behalf?"²⁸

The matter of the "Roosevelt Division" became a nation-wide issue. There were demands, "Send Roosevelt to France!" (presumed to have originated with his friends and supporters). From the other side of the Atlantic came impassioned appeals, "Send us Roosevelt!" From the Colonel himself, "I ask only that I be given a chance to render service which I know I can render, and nine out of ten of those who oppose me do so because they believe I will render it too well."²⁹ An eminent American architect then in Paris

²⁸ Hagedorn, Sagamore Hill, 363.

²⁹ Ibid., 364.

cabled the New York Times: "The presence of an ex-President of the United States will send a thrill through the fighting line of the allies. He is known here as a leader of men, as was Kitchener, and it is he whom France awaits."³⁰ Henry Watterson, a Democratic stalwart and fighting editor of the Louisville Courier-Journal wrote: "The appearance of an ex-President of the United States leading American soldiers to the battle front would electrify the world." And Van Valkenberg in the Philadelphia North American suggested his readers imagine what the magic name of Roosevelt would mean to hard-pressed Britain and bleeding France.³¹

"The President need not fear me politically," commented Roosevelt. "If I am allowed to go I would not last. I am too old.... But I could arouse the belief that America was coming; I could show the Allies what was on the way." The Colonel knew, as did the nation, that, to a greater degree than any other living man, he had the capacity to inspire youth. He was eager to put this capacity to work, and he expressed the hope that he might live to "face the foe" in the trenches.³²

With the week following, Colonel Roosevelt, in a statement which not only rang with patriotism but reverberated with indignation, disbanded his paper division and optional use of volunteer divisions.³³ Hope came to

³⁰ Bishop, Roosevelt, 424.

³¹ Hagedorn, Sagamore Hill, 364.

³² Ibid.

³³ Sullivan, Over Here, 497.

Roosevelt, and he immediately wired the President for permission to raise two divisions, or, if the President desired, four. But this optimism vanished on May 18, 1917, when the President issued a statement to the press in words which seemed chosen to "reduce the patriot to the romantic adventurer:"³⁴

It would be very agreeable to me to pay Mr. Roosevelt this compliment, and the Allies the compliment of sending to their aid one of our most distinguished public men, an ex-President who has rendered many conspicuous public services and proved his gallantry in many striking ways. Politically, too, it would no doubt have a very fine effect and make a profound impression. But this is not the time or the occasion for compliment or for any action not calculated to contribute to the immediate success of the war. The business now in hand is undramatic, practical,³⁵ and of scientific definiteness and precision.

This was one of the very few times when Woodrow Wilson took direct notice publicly of Theodore Roosevelt.³⁶ The last two sentences of his statement sounded very unWilson-like, and showed a far greater concern for practical and accelerated action than either the President's former or subsequent policies indicated.³⁸

With the week following, Colonel Roosevelt, in a statement which not only rang with patriotism but reverberated with indignation, disbanded his paper division and

³⁴ Hagedorn, Sagamore Hill, 365.

³⁵ Bishop, Roosevelt, 425.

³⁶ Sullivan, Over Here, 498.

³⁷ Bishop, Roosevelt, 425-26.

³⁸ Ibid., 426.

absolved his volunteers from further connection with the movement:³⁷

As good American citizens we loyally obey many the decision of the Commander-in-Chief of the American Army and Navy. The men who have volunteered will now consider themselves absolved from all further connection with this movement.... Our sole aim is to help in every way in the successful prosecution of the war and we most heartily feel that no individual's personal interest should for one moment be considered save as it serves the general public interest. We rejoice that a division composed of our fine regular soldiers and marines under so gallant and efficient a leader as General Pershing is to be sent abroad. We have a right to a certain satisfaction in connection therewith.

I wish respectfully to point out certain errors into which the President has been led in his announcement....

In the latter portion of his statement, the Colonel denied that his was to be an independent command (as Wilson one time had charged), that there was any political or personal gratification intended by those who worked for the division; and denied that anything dramatic existed about the proposed action except "as all proposals indicating eagerness or willingness to sacrifice life for an ideal are dramatic."³⁸

That the Colonel should have placed the name of General John J. Pershing in his statement cannot be considered as accidental. Because of past relationships, he had a special interest in the Missouri General, and in view of the circumstances involved, any praise and publicity which Pershing got would tend to cast a favorable light

³⁷ Bishop, Roosevelt, 425-26.

³⁸ Ibid., 426.

upon ex-President Roosevelt as well as upon the General. During Roosevelt's tenure in the White House, he had promoted Pershing to brigadier general, over the heads of many senior officers. Had it not been for this action, "Black-jack" Pershing could not have risen higher in rank, by regular promotion, than a major by 1916. Hence, Pershing would never have been in a position to be chosen to lead the Expedition in France except by this favor from Roosevelt.³⁹ Roosevelt lacked these two qualifications.

Pringle among others suggested that Roosevelt's presence in France would have placed Pershing in an impossible position, that the Colonel would have been a constant source of friction. These thoughts were presented in the light of past observations of the Colonel. Pringle asserts that Roosevelt could not have been subordinate, try as he might. In his job as Assistant Navy Secretary and in the Spanish-American War, he proved that subordination just was not in his nature.⁴⁰

It has been questioned as to what General Pershing's view was regarding such organizations as the "Roosevelt Division". Did he agree with the suggestion concerning

³⁹ Pershing, well aware of his indebtedness to Roosevelt, made the following farewell request of Secretary Baker: "If I cable requesting that the two Roosevelt boys [Archie and T.R., Jr.] be sent to France, will you grant the request?" The answer was in the affirmative, and such a cable was forthcoming. Palmer, Baker, 205.

⁴⁰ Pringle, Roosevelt, 598.

possible friction with Roosevelt? In his memoirs, the Commanding General of the American Expeditionary Force made no mention of any potential friction with the Colonel. He did say, however, that granting the request for one division would have "opened the door for many similar requests." Furthermore, he stated that in a war such as was raging, it was "necessary that officers, especially those in high command, be thoroughly trained and disciplined."⁴¹ Obviously, Roosevelt lacked these two qualifications.

There were many logical reasons why it was not feasible to permit the organization of such a force as Roosevelt desired. Frederick Palmer, writing the account of Newton D. Baker's experiences, with Baker's assistance, reasoned that if the Colonel were given permission to go to Europe with a military unit, then why could not others expect a similar concession, e.g. movie stars, champion golfers, leaders of fraternal organizations and their subordinates, and hardware association leaders and their salesmen.⁴² Furthermore, it was possible that men of political ambition would go to Europe as unit commanders, develop a colorful war record for themselves, and then return home to reap their rewards. The effectiveness of such leaders, Palmer suggested, would be limited, inasmuch as they could not be sufficiently strict with their men

⁴¹ John J. Pershing, My Experiences in the World War (New York, 1931), 22.

⁴² Palmer, Baker, 204.

⁴⁵ Ibid., 196.

⁴⁶ Bishop, Roosevelt, 428.

and at the same time maintain their desired popularity.⁴³

From Palmer's accounts of affairs concerning the "Roosevelt Division", it is clear that Baker thought the Colonel envisioned himself as a leader of a "corps d'élite in a brief little war in a romantic setting,"⁴⁴ and who dreamed of being "Alone in France" as he had been "Alone in Cuba."⁴⁵

What Woodrow Wilson would not see was the emotional value of the old Rough Rider's offer. Americans, partisan, bipartisan, and non-partisan, saw it. The French saw it. Two days after the President's final action was announced, Georges Clemenceau, veteran statesman and leader of the Opposition in France, addressed the Chief Executive through the press in an appeal to reconsider his decision. "At the present moment," asserted Clemenceau, "there is in France one name which sums up the beauty of American intervention --Roosevelt. You are too much of a philosopher to ignore that the influence on the people of great leaders of men often exceeds their personal merits. The name Roosevelt has this legendary force in this country at this time. Our poilus ask, 'Where is Roosevelt?' The cause of humanity, which is also your cause, will owe to them something approaching a miracle. Since it is in your power to give them [the French soldiers] before the supreme decision the promise of reward, believe me--send them Roosevelt. I tell you because I know it will gladden their hearts."⁴⁶

⁴³ Palmer, Baker, 195. VIII, 1176n.

⁴⁴ Ibid., 197.

⁴⁵ Ibid., 198.

⁴⁶ Bishop, Roosevelt, 428.

Division In making comment on the appeal from Clemenceau, Roosevelt said: "I am very grateful for the kind expressions in the letter, and, of course, it is a matter of the greatest sorrow and regret to me that I am not to have this opportunity to serve."⁴⁷

There was certainly no doubt as to the Roosevelt prestige abroad. As early as April, 1917, both Marshal Joseph Joffre and Arthur Balfour, the heads of the French and British missions in the United States, had urged the American government to send a fighting force to the western front at once. The French, in as strong a case as diplomacy and discretion would permit, made an effort to insure that Roosevelt would command this requested force.⁴⁸ In conjunction with this matter, it was reported that the State Department censored much of Marshal Joffre's first major address in the United States, because of too strong a reference to the volunteer division idea.⁴⁹ In May, 1917, Colonel Roosevelt received a letter from the prominent Captain de Rochambeau, of the Fifth Regiment of French Infantry at the front. The Captain expressed his gratification over the Congressional approval for the "Roosevelt

⁴⁷ Bishop, Roosevelt, 428.

⁴⁸ Palmer asserts that the British, through a conversation between Secretary Baker and a General of the British military mission, revealed their opposition to the sending of volunteer divisions. Palmer, Baker, 202. Roosevelt, 429.

⁴⁹ Roosevelt, Letters, VIII, 1176n.

⁵² Bishop, Roosevelt, 429.

Division" and signified the hope that he would be one of the first to salute the Rough Rider with the title of "My General" on the battlefields of France. In his reply, Roosevelt did not hesitate to vent some of his feelings. "I bitterly regret," he said, "that my Government has refused to allow me to raise troops and take them to France. The reasons were not connected with patriotism, or with military efficiency, and so there is no use of my trying to get the decision altered."⁵⁰

To others, Roosevelt was quoted as saying: "I wanted to go to the war, and the people wanted me to go. I keep my good health by having a very bad temper, kept under good control." "Of course, I was disappointed...but I have not the slightest feeling against fate."⁵¹

In a letter later that summer to his son Ted, who was again in training at Plattsburg, Colonel Roosevelt is quoted as saying: "Of course, the President, in turning down my Division, was actuated by the basest and most contemptible political reasons..... But I need not grumble about fate; I had my day, and it was a good day."⁵²

spread dissatisfaction with the existing military system, a matter which gained the serious attention of Congress.

The President and his administration seemed to be

¹ Wister, Friendship, 352.

⁵⁰ Bishop, Roosevelt, 429.

⁵¹ Hagedorn, Sagamore Hill, 365.

⁵² Bishop, Roosevelt, 429.

CHAPTER VII

AMERICA AND ROOSEVELT IN THE WAR

Throughout most of the year 1916, the outcome of the war was a matter of grave doubt. These were truly dark days for the Allies. In the Siege of Verdun that year, over 400,000 Frenchmen were killed, most of them blown to "nameless shreds of flesh, splashed over many miles."¹ The extremely serious nature of conditions in Europe came to have its reflections in America. Although the presidential election absorbed the public attention during most of the last half of the year, American opinions toward war-time problems took definite shape, once the political fracas had folded. After November, Theodore Roosevelt, who until then had only emphasized national preparedness and righting the wrong done to Belgium, now advocated most emphatically the single policy of immediate and total war with Germany.² Never before in history was opinion in the country so favorable and so in support of compulsory military training as in the winter of 1916-1917.³ Furthermore, there was widespread dissatisfaction with the existing military system, a matter which gained the serious attention of Congress.⁴

⁶ Perry, The President and his administration seemed to be

¹ Wister, Friendship, 352.

² Mowry, Progressive Movement, 370.

³ Perry, Plattsburg, 155.

⁴ Ibid., 156.

one of the few segments of American thought, outside of the pacifists, which did not demonstrate a sense of urgency over the turn of events in Europe. The Administration seemed to sacrifice every other consideration to the policy of securing peace by negotiation through the good offices of the President of the United States. Wilson was devoted to the idea of America playing the dual role of model and agent of peace, hence he was conservatively disposed toward the recommendations for a rejuvenation of the military.⁵ On this matter, the Secretary of War remained non-committal.⁶

On January 22, 1917, the Chief Executive delivered an address to Congress describing his ideas of this country's responsibility in obtaining peace--"a peace made secure by the organized major force of mankind"⁷ and based upon the principles of a "Monroe Doctrine" extended to the whole world.⁸ This was the "peace without victory" speech. The ideals outlined in it were acclaimed by the major portion of the American press and by liberal forces throughout the world.⁹ But it was not well received by the Republicans in Congress or by Theodore Roosevelt. The ex-Presidenting the

⁵ Part of the dissatisfaction over the existing military setup was the lack of any form of compulsory training.

⁶ Perry, Plattsburg, 156. "acceptable to us."¹² In view

⁷ Baker, Wilson, VI, 428. "as, the German Government on Janu-

⁸ Ibid., 429. announced the resumption of full submarine

⁹ Ibid., 429-30.

¹⁰ Roosevelt, Letters, VIII, 1156-57. Roosevelt to Senator Lodge, February 20, 1917.

¹¹ Hagedorn, Sagamore Hill, 403.

¹² Baker, Wilson, VI, 433.

interpreted Wilson's words as an unwillingness to declare war under any circumstances, and he was prompted to describe his adversary as "yellow" in the presence of danger and as one who would "accept any insult or injury from the hands of a fighting man."¹⁰

Throughout the ensuing two years, Roosevelt struck relentlessly at Wilson's peace without victory idea. In one of his last statements on this subject before his death, he proved himself a prophet, as he had done numerous times through his long career. In June 1918, speaking in opposition to Wilson's apparent desire for a negotiated peace and in favor of a complete "knockout", Roosevelt declared that "unless we knock out Germany we will have to fight again, probably within the lifetime of those now young."¹¹

A most significant turn of events was very soon to follow the "peace without victory" appeal and to cast the United States in a new light in world events. Some six days before the President made his Congressional address and unknown to him, the Kaiser had decided to place "absolutely no" reliance on Wilson's peace efforts. Upon receiving the President's speech, the German attitude remained the same, finding nothing in it which could be considered as a "step in the direction of a peace acceptable to us."¹² In view

This was a retraction of the German position taken in of these official positions, the German Government on January 31, 1917, announced the resumption of full submarine itself was a yielding to the Wilson ultimatum of April 1917, announced the resumption of full submarine without warning and without saving the lives thereon.

¹⁰ Roosevelt, Letters, VIII, 1156-57. Roosevelt to Senator Lodge, February 20, 1917.

¹¹ Hagedorn, Sagamore Hill, 403.

¹² Baker, Wilson, VI, 433.

warfare.¹³ This shock engulfed the humanitarian reaction to the recent Presidential peace plans and sent a wave of indignation through the country. Effective February 1st, the Germans were to forcibly prevent all navigation in the war zone. the declaration of war with Germany found ex-

The commercial and legal grievances held against the Allies by Americans were eclipsed by the violence of, outraged public pride. Paxson describes Wilson as having been dragged down from the level of logic to that of action.¹⁴ The Sussex Pledge, which had resulted from the President's threat to break relations unless satisfaction was received on the submarine issue, had now been broken. This time there were no alternatives. The President severed United States relations with Germany on February 3rd, and from this time forth it was no longer a question of preparedness but of preparation for an immediately impending emergency.

Popular enthusiasm for the cause of the Allies was rapidly growing in the United States. News of the Zimmerman note and of the Russian revolution was having its positive effects upon public opinion. America was no longer neutral, either in spirit or in action.¹⁶ All eyes were now turned to the forthcoming first session of the new 65th

Roosevelt. Letters, VIII, 1157 and 1162. Letters to Senator Lodge dated February 20, 1917, and March 13, 1917.

¹³ This was a retraction of the German position taken in the last of the Sussex notes (May 4, 1916) which in itself was a yielding to the Wilson ultimatum of April 18, 1916. Thus Germany had agreed not to sink merchant ships without warning and without saving the lives thereon.

¹⁴ Paxson, Pre-War Years, 396.

Congress and to the army program which the President was slated to recommend to that body on its opening day, April 2.

The two intervening months between the diplomatic break and the declaration of war with Germany found ex-President Roosevelt in a difficult position. He sincerely hoped that the United States entry would become a reality, but he was sorely chagrined at the Administration's failure to prepare for it. Because he had had dreams of leading a division in Europe, he knew that he would have to be cautious in his criticism of the division-granting authority. However, in private correspondence with such friends as Henry Cabot Lodge and Hiram Johnson he could not refrain from speaking his mind. To the former he wrote that "nothing is being done for preparedness." Fearing that this could mean a Wilson disinterest in entering the war, the old Colonel asserted that "if he Wilson does not go to war with Germany I shall skin him alive."¹⁵ To Johnson he pointed out that "almost two weeks have passed since the break with Germany, and Leonard Wood tells me that there has not been one particle of effective preparation."¹⁶

¹⁵ Roosevelt, Letters, VIII, 1157 and 1162. Letters to Senator Lodge dated February 20, 1917, and March 13, 1917.

¹⁶ Ibid., 1157. Letter to Governor Johnson dated February 17, 1917. General Wood was soon to be "shanghaied" to the newly created and remote Southeastern Department of the Army, Charleston, S. C., after having made a number of addresses in support of universal military training while serving as Commander of the all-important Department of the East.

Roosevelt's criticisms were not reserved entirely for the President and his Administration. He was growing more and more bitter toward the Progressive LaFollette, especially in view of the Senator's pacifist opposition to what little preparedness effort the President was making. LaFollette, as the leader of the "little group of willful men, representing no opinion but their own,"¹⁷ was accused by the Colonel of being an "unhung traitor" who ought to be hung if the war should come.¹⁸ Moreover, Roosevelt said he was "utterly sick of the gush about 'supporting the President'" and suggested that those people who continually "shrieked" such a phrase were only less guilty than Wilson for existing conditions.¹⁹

With the passing of each week after the diplomatic break, Roosevelt appears to have become more restless, fearing that this country might not become an official and active participant in the war. He vented such emotions before the Union League Club of New York on March 20th. There, he reminded his listeners that Germany's action of seven weeks past²⁰ "was itself a declaration of war and should have been treated as such." During the intervening time, he

¹⁷ This tag was placed on the small group of Progressive and Republican senators who vigorously opposed even such a minor step toward preparedness as the armed neutrality bill.

¹⁸ Roosevelt, Letters, VIII, 1163n. Letter to Cabot Lodge, February 20, 1917.

¹⁹ Ibid., 1162. Letters to Lodge March 13 and 18, 1917.

²⁰ Reference is made to the revocation of the Sussex Pledge.

asserted, Germany "has steadily waged war upon us, and he suggested that if Lexington and Bunker Hill were sufficient cause for all out war, then surely the German actions over the previous two years were adequate reason to fight inasmuch as more American lives had been lost at the hands of the Germans than were taken by the British in these two colonial battles. The "proper" action which was taken President Roosevelt alleged. "It was an empty gesture, unless it was followed by vigorous and efficient action. Yet...we have done nothing. We have not even prepared." "There is no question about 'going to war,'" he declared. "Germany is already at war with us.... Let us face the accomplished fact, admit that Germany is at war with us, and in our turn wage war on Germany with all our energy and courage, and regain the right to look the whole world in the eyes without flinching."²¹ In the same period,²³ Though the President was By late March, 1917, involvement for the United States,²⁴ States was generally regarded as inevitable inasmuch as every compromise short of war had been tried and had failed. When Congress met on April 2, President Wilson announced the failure of the policy of "Armed Neutrality" and subsequently urged a declaration of war.²² the following state-

²¹ Roosevelt, Letters, VIII, 1163n.

²² The Congressional Joint Resolution and the Presidential Proclamation declaring a state of war with Germany were signed and published on April 6, 1917. Progressive

²³ Bishop, Roosevelt, 423.

The Chief Executive, in his Congressional message, sought an increase in the size of the army. Such additions were to "be chosen upon the principle of universal liability of service." The Presidential desires expressed in this statement were reflected in the Selective Service Act of May 18, 1917, which rejected the highly-promoted idea of universal military training, but which provided the President with authorization to increase "temporarily," by one million, the size of the military forces.

Wilson's message to Congress was received by Colonel Roosevelt with mixed emotions. Generally he was favorable to it. He was in disagreement with the Administration however over specific details (i.e. Roosevelt strongly favored universal military training). Roosevelt is quoted as saying "his [Wilson's] message bears out all I have said for the past two and a half years, and condemns all he has said and done..." in the same period.²³ Though the President was accused of having "epitomized" his own thoughts,²⁴ Roosevelt may have felt flattered over this turn of events. Regardless of his reactions, on the day following Wilson's address to Congress, the ex-President called at the White House while he was passing through Washington. Though not able to see the President, he issued the following statement:²⁵

In a letter on June 22, 1917, to his "exiled" friend, Gener-

²³ Hagedorn, Sagamore Hill, 362. the President since April

²⁴ Arthur S. Link, Woodrow Wilson and the Progressive Era, 282.

²⁵ Bishop, Roosevelt, 423.

The President's message is a great state paper which will rank in history with the great state papers of which Americans in future years will be proud. It now rests with the people of the country to see that we put in practice the policy that the President has outlined and that we strike as hard, as soon, and as efficiently as possible in aggressive war against the Government of Germany.

We must send troops to the firing line as rapidly as possible. Defensive war is hopeless. We must by vigorous offensive warfare win the right to have our voice count for civilization and justice when the time for peace comes.

I, of course, very earnestly hope that I may be allowed to raise a division for immediate service at the front.

The last paragraph of this statement constituted what was possibly Roosevelt's most revealing words. It disclosed more than a capriciousness in the "sweetness and light" of this overly generous statement to his old enemy. The ulterior motive undoubtedly was to "butter up" the President in order to lure him into granting Roosevelt's most cherished desire--leadership of a division. Be this as it may, there was a conspicuous lull in the President's condemnation of the Chief Executive and his Administration throughout the ensuing three or four months. This could not be considered a coincidence, for during much of that time the decision regarding a "Roosevelt Division" was hanging in the balance. He seemed to defend his silence in a letter on June 22, 1917, to his "exiled" friend, General Wood. "I have not criticized the President since April 2nd," he admitted, "but neither do I lie about him! I intend to tell the truth and point out the criminal folly

of our having failed to prepare, and to speak plainly of the dangers ahead."²⁶

Theodore Roosevelt played a conspicuous part in national affairs during the first weeks and months of American participation in the war. Not only did his division-raising efforts attract national attention, but he was a prominent influence in Washington legislative circles. On the occasion of his visit to the White House,²⁷ President Wilson asked Roosevelt's support for his proposed legislation for "temporary" compulsory military training. This favor was easy to grant, inasmuch as he had been a long-time advocate of compulsory service. On Capitol Hill, his strength was felt especially as the Selective Service Act went through the legislative channels. And here again, Roosevelt unquestionably was hoping his cooperation would bring the desired reward. This motive was recognized by his antagonists in the Congress, and there was a major hassle over the proposed provision to the Act which would permit the President to create volunteer divisions.

The effect of the pioneering work done by Roosevelt and Wood, as well as by the Plattsburg Movement, in regard to preparedness and American international responsibility became quite evident upon our entry into the war. Their efforts had borne fruit. The extent to which the general

²⁶ Roosevelt, Letters, VIII, 1203.

²⁷ This was only a few days subsequent to Roosevelt's unsuccessful initial attempt to have a private conversation with Wilson.

public seemed ready to accept the sacrifices of world conflict came as a surprise to the President and to other top government officials. A major portion of the population were favorable to the idea of compulsory service, contrary to high official opinion that the people would insist on the old American tradition of voluntary enlistment. So mistaken was Wilson regarding public opinion on this matter that he did not even dare to send up the customary "trial balloon" on the subject prior to his Congressional message.²⁸

The New York Tribune recognized the impact on public thinking which Roosevelt's and General Wood's vociferous advocacy of preparedness had had. "National conscription was the one thing for which the country was not unprepared," it editorialized. "Congress didn't know this" and "neither did the Administration." "Up to the day when the draft of a selective service bill was sent to Congress," reminded the Tribune, "the War Department had not been able to bring itself even to whisper the word conscription." Not only were the people ready for conscription, asserted this journal, but "even a year ago the country would have welcomed a broad and logical conscription law...." "The common sense of the nation had dismissed as fatuous all the hesitations at Washington about basing our military effort on universal service."²⁹ The Selective Service Act was

²⁸ Perry, Plattsburg, 171.

²⁹ New York Tribune, July 1, 1917, as reported by and quoted from Perry, Plattsburg, 172.

thus quickly passed.³⁰ Perhaps the old Rough Rider, because of this invaluable service to his country, should be exonerated of such charges of noisy demagoguery as were levelled by the New York Times, H. L. Mencken, and others.

Having been denied the privilege of serving his flag on foreign battlefields, Roosevelt set out to aid his country in whatever manner he could. He was not called upon to do anything great or glorious, to be sure. However, he seemed pleased and happy to contribute to the "cause" even in minor ways. Whether it was in some local capacity at Oyster Bay or a task with national character, the sage of Sagamore Hill gave each project his heart and his soul. When the first detachment of American troops was ready to sail for France in June, 1917, the American Bible Society, which supplied the men with pocket Testaments, asked Colonel Roosevelt to write a message for their covers. In eager compliance with this request, he wrote:³¹

The teachings of the New Testament are foreshadowed in Macah's verse: 'What more doth the Lord require of thee than to do justice, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God.'

Do justice; and therefore fight valiantly against the armies of Germany and Turkey, for these nations in this crisis stand for the reign of Moloch and Beelzebub on this earth.

Love mercy; treat prisoners well; succor the wounded; treat every woman as

³⁰ May 18, 1917.

³¹ Bishop, Roosevelt, 430.

if she were your sister; care for the little children, and be tender with the old and the helpless.

Walk humbly; you will do so if you study the life and teachings of the Savior.

May the God of Justice and Mercy have you in His keeping.

These were the words of a man who had given four sons to the armed services,³² who loyally stood by them to spiritually and through continuous correspondence, and who lost one of those sons in the war. These were the words of a man who was criticized over and over again as a blood-thirsty anarchist and a lover of war. Surely these phrases written for the Bible Society indicate something of the inner nature of the man, a nature which did not always have outward manifestations. Though his was a controversial personality and admittedly contradictory at times, his character had a thesis. A very valid compendium of the Roosevelt character was written by the journalist Julia Street, who described him as "a Christian gentleman, his Christianity being muscular."³³

³⁴ Paxson, "War Government," 59.

³² Mrs. Roosevelt seems to have taken the same philosophical approach toward military service as did her husband. During 1915, the popular song "I Didn't Raise My Boy To Be A Soldier" is said to have provoked her on one occasion to echo: "I didn't raise my boy to be the only soldier." Julia Street, "The Most interesting American," Collier's, LVI (October 23, 1915), 24.

³³ Ibid., 6.

The first months of the war were agonizing ones for the Administration. There was much lack of coordination of effort and hence no end of confusion. For a period of six months, most of the mobilization steps taken by the government were temporary measures adopted pending Congressional action.³⁴ American preparation for participation in the war was made more difficult by the lack of agreement as to the form which that participation should take. It was later revealed that the British emphasized the duty of the United States to build new tonnage and to produce food, while on the other hand, the French imperatively demanded that American troops be sent to Europe as soon as possible. On the basis of the English strategy that ships would win the war, provided sufficient production could be reached, it was originally intended that no U. S. troops would be sent abroad until March, 1918.³⁵ Apparently the appealing force of such urgent statements as Marshal Joffre's "Let the American soldier come now!" were too strong, for early contingents of American troops reached Europe the preceding summer.³⁶

³⁴ Paxson, "War Government," 59.

³⁵ Ibid., This information was given in testimony by General Sharpe in 1918 before a Congressional committee investigating the War Department.

³⁶ "Our Boys to France to Avert Disaster," Literary Digest, LIV (May 12, 1917), 1393. Appearing on the front page of this issue, this article outlined the urgency that America contribute men and material to the war at the earliest possible moment.

³⁷ Sullivan, Over Here, 372.

The problems of getting the nation geared to war could not, of course, fail to have its political implications and overtones. Leaders throughout the country were becoming concerned over the apparent inability of the Administration to get all aspects of national life geared to a war footing. Partisan politicians kept closely tuned to the developing situations which were of interest to them. War Secretary Baker pointed out to a conference of trade publication editors in May, 1917, that modern war was more than a Samson and David affair. Instead of battling with spears, slings, swords, and shields, the world was now in a struggle between smokestacks and engines. Baker emphasized the spreading realization that war was more than drafting, arming, training, and transporting soldiers.³⁷ The Secretary seemed to admit the inability of one single governmental department--his own--to cope with all aspects of war preparation. In ensuing months, however, he failed to convince many leaders that he was capably accomplishing even those things which could rightfully be expected of the War Department.

The New York Times of January 14, 1918, editorialized concerning the questionable administrative capacity of the Wilson Administration. In commenting on Secretary Baker's appearance before the Senate Committee on Military Affairs, the Times criticized the air of assurance exuded by the Secretary and stated that he had not convinced the

³⁷ Sullivan, Over Here, 372.

members of that committee that his complacent satisfaction with the present conditions and War Department business was warranted by the facts. The Times, usually quite favorable to the Administration in defending it against the attacks of Roosevelt and others, was now reiterating almost verbatim what Roosevelt had charged all along. "There are reports," stated this great newspaper, "of a feeling of gloom and apprehension at the capital, of a feeling that the business of preparing for war is not under competent management and direction; and there is a fear that calamities and national humiliation will be the penalty of the administrative incapacity to make good and effective use of the sums Congress and the people have provided.... The atmosphere of self-satisfaction with which authority in Washington surrounds itself does not extend over the whole country.... There will be an awakening at the capital when they begin to ask 'Why, in all these months and with all this money, have you not made us ready for war?'" The Times climaxed its editorial by questioning why a single individual with great authority had not been appointed to direct and drive the business of war mobilization.³⁸

This suggestion by so reputable a newspaper naturally could not go unheeded. It may very well have been the motivating force behind some subsequent serious thought on both sides of the preparedness fence. It was only a period of some two months until the President followed this

³⁸ The New York Times, January 14, 1918.

advice, and within a span of a few days, the Roosevelt element had made a proposal, the embryo of which seems to have existed in this Times editorial.

If Roosevelt's vociferousness in sounding the alarm of inadequate leadership in Washington was discounted as political play, credence was given to the rumblings of uneasiness by one who was above suspicion of having personal motives for his criticism. This was no less a person than the highly respected chairman of the Senate Committee on Military Affairs, Senator George E. Chamberlain, Democrat of Oregon. The Senator, who spoke with great weight and authority, made the assertion that he was speaking as an American and not as a Democrat in charging that the military establishment of America "has broken down" and almost ceased its functioning.³⁹

The uneasiness which existed at the turn of the year, 1917-1918, culminated in the appointment of Bernard M. Baruch the following March as the head of the War Industries Board. It was determined that the WIB should be a unified command under which all the work of mobilization already accomplished by the Council of National Defense and other non-War Department agencies should be coordinated.⁴⁰ "Czar" Baruch's capable hands became quite

³⁹ Sullivan, Over Here, 374. The Senator made this statement after the hearing before which Secretary Baker testified.

⁴⁰ Paxson, Pre-War Years, 253.

⁴¹ Sullivan, Over Here, 375.

evident in the mobilization effort. Thus the legitimate fears of the people were eased and tensions subsided. However, this was not accomplished until after one of America's little political dramas had been enacted.

Late in January, after Senator Chamberlain had made his startling statement, Theodore Roosevelt held in Washington what Sullivan describes as a "court of indignation" at the home of his daughter, Mrs. Nicholas Longworth. Among those present at this event was a "council of protest," which was concerned with the wartime administrative inefficiency in the Federal Government. It is suspected that most of those in this body were either old cronies of the Colonel or persons having a very similar attitude as his toward the Wilson Administration. It was this "council", under the guidance of the former President, which made an unprecedented recommendation as a remedy for the ailments so obvious in Washington. They suggested, if not demanded, that a coalition cabinet be created--a cabinet in which would be assembled the best brains of the country for the management of the war.⁴¹ A unified management of the country, in every detail but political, would thus be provided. This idea, however, was promptly squelched by President Wilson, who then asked for, and received, almost unlimited power to organize and direct all national resources. Congress could hardly balk at the President's request for such authority in view of their own demands

⁴¹ Sullivan, Over Here, 375.

for greater efficiency and more positive leadership. The authorization bill having been passed, Baruch was given the job of coordinating and commanding the country's resources--a job "to operate the whole United States as a single factory dominated by one management."⁴²

America in 1917 was in a war "up to her knees." It was a war very different from any other in which she had been involved. Journalists found many adjectives with which to describe it and many labels and titles to attach to it. Some writers of the day chose to call the American segment of this great struggle "Roosevelt's War," for it was a conflict which he sincerely believed in and in which he had sought to have his country participate. It was said to be "peculiarly his" though he was not a part of it physically. To be sure, "a war without Roosevelt did violence to an American legend." Wilson, the historian, did not seem able to appreciate this fact.⁴³ Colonel Roosevelt was left chagrined and frustrated because someone else was directing a war that "by all rules of reasoning should have been his to run."⁴⁴

Relatively speaking, Roosevelt's treatment of the President during the first few months of American participation was good (regardless of his motives). This, even

⁴² Sullivan, Over Here, 375.

⁴³ Mowry, Progressive Movement, 371.

⁴⁴ Ibid., 372.

the Colonel's critics would have been forced to admit. But as time wore on and he saw his physical self and his mobilization ideas ignored more and more by the Administration, he not only returned to his old characteristic of roaring bitter criticism at the President, but he developed what Mowry terms an unfairness as great as any man consumed with anger can have.⁴⁵ The terminology the old Rough Rider used on Wilson became less and less complimentary. His derogations came to be applied even to old political colleagues who found it their duty to aid the Wilson Administration. The President was categorized as an "exceedingly base" individual with a soul "rotten through and through," while such former Roosevelt supporters as Bainbridge Colby and Felix Frankfurter, who were now associated with the Administration, were termed "ridiculous creatures."⁴⁶ The Colonel accused Wilson of having won the 1916 election under false pretenses,⁴⁷ and he struck again and again at the President's "peace without victory" appeal by asserting that "above all, we must insist that there shall be no inconclusive peace, no peace that is not based upon complete and over-whelming victory." As for the country's slowness in getting a proper war spirit aroused, Roosevelt pointed out that the responsibility lay with our governmental leaders, who for two and

⁴⁵ Mowry, Progressive Movement, 371.

⁴⁶ Roosevelt, Letters, VIII, 1222. Roosevelt to Lodge, August 15, 1917.

⁴⁷ Here Roosevelt apparently was alluding to the Democratic campaign statements that "he kept us out of war" and that the Republicans, if elected, would plunge us into the conflict.

a half years preceding our entry "dulled the moral conscience of the people" by arguing against American participation. "It takes time," he emphasized, "to get people who have been misled back on the right course--the very course which they have...been told was the wrong course."⁴⁸

Theodore Roosevelt in his declining days nurtured with a passion the association of those who held similar views as his own. He appeared to be willing to cooperate with almost anyone who would oppose Wilson and his ideas. It is little wonder that this rapidly aging leader developed such a vindictive attitude toward the President, having listened regularly to Henry Cabot Lodge's "song of hate" and Leonard Wood's tales of woe over the mismanagement of the army. Even such Republican Stalwarts and ex-enemies of Roosevelt as Albert B. Fall and Joseph B. Foraker, who had many unhappy remarks to make about the Administration, became new-found friends of the ex-President. Not one of these men or any other person with whom he was in constant contact, it is said, could contribute an objective point of view toward the Administration.⁴⁹ Consequently, with the passing of time, he became narrower in his views, and such views came to have less sway upon those who strived for objectivity. A letter written to Lodge on November 27, 1918, is perhaps one of the better examples demonstrating

⁴⁸ Roosevelt, Letters, VIII, 1250. Roosevelt to Ernest Lundeen, Republican Congressman from Minnesota, November 7, 1917.

⁴⁹ Mowry, Progressive Movement, 372.

his unbounded bias. Indicating a concern over the failure to publish the battlefront casualty lists, he charged it to be the Administration's "deliberate purpose" not to do so "because it is assumed that two-thirds of them [the casualties] are Republicans."⁵⁰

Despite the unfortunate turn in Roosevelt's public attitude,⁵¹ it must be noted, however, that the last period of his life was not spent entirely in a state of bitterness. Because the 1918 Congressional elections were to be so crucial, he found himself resuming old pre-1912 friendships in order to present a united front for the good of the Republican cause. Even Taft, who it is said was not of the nature to carry a grudge forever, was again, in 1918, writing "My dear Theodore." The force of the "hate Wilson" idea had provided a sufficient common ground to draw Roosevelt, Taft, and Root back together.⁵²

The ex-President's one great ambition in 1918 was to bring defeat to Woodrow Wilson by electing a Republican Congress. Without doubt, he agreed with Taft's thesis that G.O.P. control of Congress would "supply the deficiencies of...the Administration in carrying out a proper world

⁵⁰ Roosevelt, Letters, VIII, 1406.

⁵¹ There seems to be no evidence to indicate that this demeanor carried over into the Colonel's private family life. In fact, all indications are that he became mellowed in his relationships with loved ones.

⁵² Mowry, Progressive Movement, 372. an act which would prompt the former first lady to say: "I do think, Theodore, the fire would burn better if you didn't fuss with it so much." Hagedorn, Sagamore Hill, 392.

policy." For the desired end--a united and victorious Republican Party and a Democratic defeat in November--Roosevelt worked;⁵³ but the wartime damper on politics and the ethics involved therewith naturally limited the extent of his political activity. There were other factors as well which prevented his campaigning in the traditional Roosevelt fashion. Early in that election year, he had been hospitalized by a severe attack of malignant Cuban fever and had for a time been on the verge of death. Then during the summer, a leg abscess and erysipelas in one foot painfully plagued him and severely limited his physical activity.⁵⁴ The fall of the year found him struggling with lumbago, gout, and sciatic rheumatism.⁵⁵ He was no longer his old robust and bouncy self, though he retained until the end his nervous and restless energy.⁵⁶ These factors had a curious effect upon Roosevelt's political life. This was demonstrated when he emerged from the hospital. Though he was well aware that his name was being associated with the 1920 Republican nomination, he returned to his home and steadfastly refused to discuss

⁵³ Mowry, Progressive Movement, 373.

⁵⁴ Hagedorn, Sagamore Hill, 403.

⁵⁵ Ibid., 422.

⁵⁶ These omnipresent characteristics are exemplified in Hagedorn's account of a typical winter evening at Sagamore Hill for Theodore and Mrs. Roosevelt. Invariably the Colonel would poke impatiently at the burning logs in the fireplace, an act which would prompt the former First Lady to say: "I do think, Theodore, the fire would burn better if you didn't fuss with it so much." Hagedorn, Sagamore Hill, 392.

the matter of 1920. The reason he wished to get well, he asserted, was in order that he might resume his work "of endeavoring to get my country to exert her great, but lazy and unprepared strength as speedily and effectively as possible."⁵⁷ This is just what he did. But so sharp became his criticisms of the Administration because of its lackluster nature and its failure to show a "real appreciation" of the situation that a bill was introduced in the United States Senate, with Roosevelt as its primary object, calling for the imprisonment or fine of anyone guilty of "contemptuous or slurring language against the President."⁵⁸

In response to such actions, Roosevelt, in his teeth-clicking way, shot back that he was an American citizen, a free man, and loyal to governmental leaders only "to the degree in which they loyally and efficiently serve the United States." He expressed anxiousness at the opportunity to test the constitutionality of any laws limiting freedom of speech. He defended his critical position by pointing out that "no human being has questioned successfully the truth of anything I have said in criticism of the Administration." If, however, the President and his administration were held to be above criticism, he declared, then we would have in this country "the Hohenzollern doctrine of lèse majesté."⁵⁹

⁵⁷ Hagedorn, Sagamore Hill, 394.

⁵⁸ Ibid., 399. In the same vein, the Delaware House of Representatives came within one vote of passing a resolution calling for the attorney general of that state to proceed against Roosevelt for severely criticizing the conduct of the Wilson Administration.

⁵⁹ Ibid., 399.

For a year prior to April, 1918, President Wilson had displayed a somewhat muddled mind regarding the morality of American participation in the war. Preparation had not gone well, and it seemed as if the Administration considered it to be somewhat meritorious to have been unprepared for war. However, on the first anniversary of American entrance into the war, the President made a speech which was music to the ears of his adversaries. Finally recognizing that only unlimited force could "make right the law of the world," Wilson made statements which were reported by one competent journal as vindicating the principles which Theodore Roosevelt had been "so zealously upholding," principles which had now become national policy. A New York newspaper commented: "Now, thank God, we are in the war."⁶⁰

Throughout 1918, Roosevelt's public utterances were, for the most part, concerned with matters of national mobilization. His machinations behind the scenes, in private correspondence and conversation, however, were largely political in nature. Publicly, he blazed at Wilson and Secretary Baker for their "folly and evil-doing" in the war effort; privately he worked to mollify the ex-Progressives who were protesting the reactionary tone of many of the state Republican platforms. The former President so hoped for a Republican victory in November that he was willing to accept reactionary, moderate, and progressive

⁶⁰ Hagedorn, Sagamore Hill, 400-401.

candidates and platforms with equity and equanimity.⁶¹ Their bent on economic policies mattered little to him; anything would be better than Wilson and the Democrats. In his eyes, the fall elections were to be measured strictly along Democrat-Republican party lines. Therefore, the old reformer could not find it in himself under the existing conditions of 1918 to preach the traditional radical doctrines of the progressives, and hence take a chance on splitting the party. But there seemed to be another reason for his taking this position. It is believed that it reflected a revolutionary trend in his thinking, a trend which indicated a new fear of Bolshevism. He who had had his qualms about the American capitalistic system now wrote his friend William Allen White that Bolshevism "was a more serious menace to world democracy than any species of capitalism."⁶²

Throughout the summer and fall of 1918, Roosevelt made numerous speeches. During the summer, he had spoken in Omaha, St. Louis, and Chicago; in the fall, he addressed audiences from the East Coast to Montana. These latter appearances were in support of the Fourth Liberty Loan, while his previous ones were under the auspices of the National Security League and other patriotic organizations. To be sure, this itinerary was one which would have challenged the most physically able of orators; however, for Roosevelt

⁶¹ Mowry, Progressive Movement, 374.

⁶² Roosevelt, Letters, VIII, 1315. Roosevelt to William Allen White, May 2, 1918.

it was a compromise with his conventionally more active existence. It was a schedule which found him under perpetual medical care and often required last-minute ascents from bed confinement in order not to disappoint audiences. Though the enthusiasm with which the crowds received him gave the Colonel's speeches renewed energy and their old-time vigor, each experience seemed to take more and more life from him. Finally, he was forced to undergo hospitalization a second time that year, spending the period from November 11th to December 24th in New York City's Roosevelt Hospital. and their savior. The Party in New York State

It is interesting to note that throughout the pre-election period Roosevelt made very few "political" speeches --that is, speeches which could be labelled as strictly partisan from a party standpoint. However, because of the difference between his own views and Wilson's on the prosecution of the war and the conclusion of peace, the Colonel's patriotic speeches definitely carried political overtones. It must be pointed out, however, that his statements in actual support of the Republicans were generally expressed in private communication and were, without a shadow of doubt, the result of his sincere conviction that a G.O.P. victory would be in the best interests of the country. This does not mean to say that he did not express respect for those Democratic members of Congress who had served their country well. He merely believed that as a whole it was the Republican and not the Democratic members who "have done most for the efficient furtherance of the war

and have gone farthest in insistence that it should be put through until we win the peace of complete victory." The ex-President was convinced that a Republican victory would be an indication to Americans and to their allies, as well as to Germany, that the United States was more resolute than ever in fighting the war to a peace of overwhelming victory and unconditional surrender.⁶³

The Republicans had slowly come to realize that Theodore Roosevelt had been and was the beacon of opposition to the Wilson Administration, that he was their guiding light and their savior. The Party in New York State desperately needed an uplift and a victory, and thus they turned to the Colonel. He was asked, if not begged, to be a candidate for governor of that state. Even his old political enemies gave him their blessing. Roosevelt fully realized the significance of the New York governorship for anyone with Presidential aspirations; and he recognized with sardonic amusement that he, who had been in the "political scrapbasket" four years before and who now "was actually calling the tune both in the White House and on Capitol Hill," was being placed on a very high pedestal. But he declined the invitation.⁶⁴ He said that, as an American citizen, he had "no interest whatever in

⁶³ Roosevelt, Letters, VIII, 1374. This view was expressed by Roosevelt in a letter of endorsement to Selden Palmer Spencer, Republican candidate for the United States Senate from Missouri, October 15, 1918.

⁶⁴ Hagedorn, Sagamore Hill, 406. effort to get Republican and Democratic Party leaders treated as a party politics." Roosevelt, Letters, VIII, 1377. Roosevelt to John Henry Bartlett, October 18, 1918.

politics" at that time other than from the standpoint of "straight Americanism" and of "winning the war."⁶⁵ Having refused this nomination, he wrote to his son Ted: "My whole heart is wrapped up in this war and in what is to come after; my whole pride and interest is in you boys and your wives; and I just could not wrench my mind off to a wholly different track."⁶⁶ Roosevelt's one and only concern was about the fate of his country and those who were working and fighting for its glorious perpetuation. It seemed impossible for him to divert his thought and attentions to such parochial matters as state problems and politics. His patriotic interests in this country and in the war, for which he and his four sons were an allied fighting team, had even brought Roosevelt to endorse the President's request for an adjournment of politics for the duration.⁶⁷

Roosevelt recognized the widespread and growing movement for his presidential candidacy in 1920. It had snowballed during the 1918 "off-year" election campaigns. Pressure had built up for him to state his position. Finally, he made the statement that he would run, if----

⁶⁵ Roosevelt, Letters, VIII, 1377. Roosevelt to John Henry Bartlett, prominent New Hampshire Republican, October 18, 1918.

⁶⁶ Hagedorn, Sagamore Hill, 418.

⁶⁷ This endorsement was withdrawn when, to Roosevelt's "great regret," it became evident to him that the "Administration and Democratic Party leaders treated this announcement merely as an effort to get Republicans to play Democratic politics." Roosevelt, Letters, VIII, 1377. Roosevelt to John Henry Bartlett, October 18, 1918.

"If the people want me, but only if they want me," were his qualifying remarks. He asserted he would not "lift a finger" for the nomination nor make any contest for it. The nomination "will have to come to me," he explained, for "it would be worthless on any other basis."⁶⁸

Most Republicans of every stripe admitted that Roosevelt could have the 1920 nomination without strings and on his own terms. Raymond Robins is reported as having remarked to the Colonel's old New York political enemy William Barnes: "I suspect we are going to nominate TR in 1920 by acclamation." "Acclamation, hell!" Barnes is said to have retorted. "We're going to nominate him by assault."⁶⁹ Fate deprived history of such an interesting spectacle.

Roosevelt's last big battle with Wilson was precipitated on October 26, 1918. It was on that date that the President contradicted the stand he had taken in favor of a moratorium on wartime political activity, and proceeded to ask the voters for a Democratic Congress.⁷⁰

"The leaders of the [Republican] minority in the present

⁶⁸ Hagedorn, Sagamore Hill, 406.

⁶⁹ Ibid., 406.

⁷⁰ It is noted that Herbert Hoover, of recent European food relief fame, endorsed the Wilson appeal for a Democratic Congress. Likewise, he ardently supported Wilson's League of Nations when it came up for debate. Roosevelt, Letters, VIII, 1396n.

Congress," Wilson pointed out in his pre-election appeal to the electorate, "have unquestionably been pro-war, but they have been anti-Administration." "The return of a Republican majority in either house of Congress," he insisted, "would be interpreted on the other side of the water as a repudiation of my leadership."⁷¹

Roosevelt, the unquestioned leader and voice of the Republican Party, was not slow in responding to the Wilson statement. In the general sense of the phrase, the former President had adjourned his political activity, in accordance with the President's request. It is not surprising therefore that he was extremely galled at the Chief Executive's action. In what has been described as Roosevelt's last great speech, the famed Rough Rider, in a two-hour discourse before a packed Carnegie Hall convocation of New York Republicans on October 28, dealt with the matter in a detail of logic. Lincoln, he pointed out to his audience, had made no "party test" in the wartime election of 1864. Instead, the Great Emancipator had "appealed to all loyal men of all parties," asking "that the test of fitness for Congress be, not adherence to his personal administration, but unconditional support of the

⁷¹ Bishop, Roosevelt, 467. It is a credit to Roosevelt's political acumen that, though he had contemplated a similar appeal for votes, he suppressed the plan when he realized it would leave the way open for a Democratic attack. Frederic L. Paxson, review of Talks With Theodore Roosevelt by John J. Leary, Jr., American Historical Review, XXVI (October, 1920), 149-150.

war." Wilson, on the other hand, the Colonel further enunciated, "does not ask for loyalty to the Nation," but rather "asks only for support of himself."⁷² Thus, Democrats, be they even anti-war, were being supported for Congressional seats by the wartime President. And, Roosevelt did not hesitate to remind his countrymen that "this is the people's government, this is the people's war, and the peace that follows will be the people's peace."⁷³

This denunciation of Wilson was the keynote of Roosevelt's New York address, and it received nationwide circulation and attention. Bishop, among others, suggests that this cogent rebuttal to the President's argument was a "powerful factor" in bringing majorities to the Republicans in both houses of Congress in the November election.⁷⁴

Until the day of voting, Roosevelt did not let the public or his friends forget the Chief Executive's action, a move which was a signal to the Colonel and his Republican colleagues that there was open season in politics once again. He is reported to have made this interesting observation in regard to this new development: "He [Wilson] has...I am thankful to say, come out into the open and made a frank party appeal for the Democratic Party against the Republicans; and this at least makes the fight more

⁷² Bishop, Roosevelt, 467.

⁷³ Hagedorn, Sagamore Hill, 422.

⁷⁴ Bishop, Roosevelt, 468.

⁷⁵ Roosevelt, Letters, VIII, 1388. Roosevelt to Timken, September 2, 1918.

comfortable."⁷⁵ He stressed to the public many times that Wilson was asking for the election of anti-war, and therefore anti-American, senators and representatives. Furthermore, he was aiding Congressmen who had been against the Administration when it was pro-war, and who had supported it by obstructing legislative efforts to uncover or put a stop to its inefficiency, waste, delay, extravagance, and corruption--all of which was damaging and had "damaged the cause of America."⁷⁶

To a prominent industrial leader, Henry H. Timken, Roosevelt wrote this message concerning Wilson's partisan appeal: "I make my [November election campaign] appeal as an American, for President Wilson has made his appeal for a Democratic Congress in the narrowest spirit of partisanship. He asks that the Republicans even although pro-war, be defeated and he makes no distinction between pro-war and anti-war Democrats, but asks for the election of all alike.... The President's appeal is a cruel insult to every Republican father and mother whose sons have entered the Army or the Navy, and I believe it would be equally resented by the Democrats whose gallant sons are in the Army or the Navy, side by side with the gallant sons of their Republican neighbors...."⁷⁷ It seemed incredible to Roosevelt that a President of the United States

⁷⁵ Bishop, Roosevelt, 468.

⁷⁶ Roosevelt, Letters, VIII, 1384. Roosevelt to Albert B. Fall, October 30, 1918.

⁷⁷ Roosevelt, Letters, VIII, 1388. Roosevelt to Timken, November 2, 1918.

in time of war would, through partisanship, choose to be the leader of his party rather than of all the people.

On October 31st, on the eve of the all-important elections, Roosevelt and Taft joined in a widely circulated statement which strongly urged the election of a Republican Congress. This move was a reaction to the known uneasiness felt by a major segment of the population over Wilson's peace theories. The Roosevelt-Taft appeal assured that a Republican Congress would stand for the unconditional surrender of Germany, the participation of the Senate in the making of the peace, and an accounting of Democratic stewardship over wartime expenditures.⁷⁸

Believing it to be the general judgment of "good Americans" that complete loyalty to the country was synonymous with complete loyalty to the war, the Colonel's steady flow of pre-election correspondence suggested that President Wilson was being unpatriotic and selfish in demanding that loyalty to him should take precedence over loyalty to the war. "The Administration has taken no act to hurry up the war, save on account of pressure from Congress," he avowed; "the people cannot be certain what President Wilson, and still less what the Democratic majority in the two Houses really intend." The problem had a solution.

⁷⁸ Roosevelt, Letters, VIII, 1388n. In his correspondence with Senator Lodge, Roosevelt had this to say concerning Wilson's plans for a negotiated peace: "Let us dictate peace by the hammering guns and not chat about peace to the accompaniment of the clicking of typewriters." Ibid., 1380. Roosevelt to Lodge, October 24, 1918.

"The one way to guarantee the efficient waging of this war to the end," declared the Colonel, "is to secure the election of a Republican Congress."⁷⁹

A Republican Congress was secured, and the old patriot revelled in his glory. The victory, especially in the Senate, fed the Roosevelt soul. Overlooking the fact that the victorious Republicans carried a strongly conservative cast, he found great happiness in the fact that Wilson's days were numbered.⁸⁰

Reflecting back upon the President's election appeal, Roosevelt wrote his British friend, Arthur Hamilton Lee, that this act by Wilson "gave me my chance, and in the last week of the campaign we did the seemingly impossible--carried the House by a substantial and the Senate by a bare majority." He dramatized the election results as a strong rebuke of the President, inasmuch as the latter had asserted that the election, so far as he was concerned, was a test of only one thing--his administration's policies.⁸¹

In an article which he wrote for The Kansas City Star, November 18th, Colonel Roosevelt described the election of a Republican Congress as "first and foremost a victory for straight Americanism. To the Republican Party it represents not so much a victory as an opportunity."⁸² This

⁷⁹ Roosevelt, Letters, VIII, 1379-1397. Roosevelt to John Henry Bartlett, October 18, 1918.

⁸⁰ Mowry, Progressive Movement, 374.

⁸¹ Roosevelt, Letters, VIII, 1397. Roosevelt to Lee, November 19, 1918.

⁸² Ibid., 1392n.

last statement indicates that Roosevelt did not choose to gloat over "his" and the Republicans' recent success; moreover, it would seem that his words injected a tone of caution and seriousness into the situation. This feeling was definitely reflected in his expressions to Lodge, expressions which warned the Republicans as to what they should and should not do with their "opportunity." "We must take the lid off and investigate, and must show no mercy to the President," he told the Senator, "[but] the situation is so good that you must not make any mistake by overplaying your hand and causing a reaction of sympathy toward the President."⁸³

The aging Roosevelt felt that he had been vindicated of the barrage of charges which had been hurled at him over the few previous years. Realizing that there had been a time when his was truly a voice in an unfriendly wilderness, he confided to his long-time friend Rudyard Kipling that he "took a certain sardonic amusement in the fact that whereas four years ago, to put it mildly, my attitude was not popular [even among most Republicans], I was now the one man whom they insisted upon following and whose statements were taken as the platform."⁸⁴

Theodore Roosevelt was once again, without question, the leader of the Republican Party. He had defeated his old enemies within that organization, and they were now

⁸³ Roosevelt, Letters, VIII, 1413. Roosevelt to Lodge, December 6, 1918.

⁸⁴ Ibid., 1405. Roosevelt to Kipling, November 23, 1918.

riding his coattails. He had not only won a tremendous victory within his old party but he had also won a victory over the Democrats. It was most emphatically a dual victory. But most significant to him was the new Republican majority in the Senate--even if it was sustained by only two seats. For quite some time before the fall elections, it was evident that the war was in its closing phases. Its end would necessitate the drawing up of a peace contract, and Roosevelt did not like what he knew of Wilson's peace concepts. To him, a Wilsonian peace would surely be a catastrophe. He saw that the 1920 presidential election would be too late to bring this matter to the people's attention, and to make it a public issue. Hence, in the 1918 Congressional elections had lain Roosevelt's only hope of being able to prove public disapproval of what was known of Wilson's peace plans, and to gain sufficient Senate votes to block his program.

To be sure, Roosevelt was more than chagrined at the manner in which the President was seeking an armistice. There was little, however, that he, his colleagues, or the electorate could do about this phase of the peace. That matter being solely in the hands of the Chief Executive and his subordinates. It was his firm conviction that, if the war were to fulfill the purpose for which we entered it, it should end in Berlin and not sooner. His bitter opposition to an armistice can thus be imagined. And it cannot be too surprising that he, Lodge, and other Republican leaders saw in the President's peace negotiations certain

political facets and motives. Lodge especially had his misgivings. To him, Wilson's negotiated peace efforts were translated as an attempt to get votes for a third term in 1920 from the German-American groups.⁸⁵ Roosevelt interpreted the President's efforts in a somewhat different light. Though a negotiated peace with Germany, he was convinced that Wilson hoped to bring that country into the League and thereby gain support for himself in his candidacy to become that organization's first president. Furthermore, it was Colonel House's intention, he asserted, "to secure an economic alliance between Germany and the United States as against England;" because it was believed in Administration circles that "we must not have Germany too much weakened, because Germany was a check on England, as otherwise we should be at England's mercy."⁸⁶

The November Republican victory was an extremely important turning point in the life and career of Woodrow Wilson. William Allen White suggests that here at the zenith of Wilson's power, the Devil grinned, the man slipped by writing a letter asking his country for a partisan Democratic Congress, and "America turned savagely upon its hero who had shown a human weakness."⁸⁷ His relatively brief but highly successful political path was soon to be smothered under a heavy overcast of mental anguish, supreme

⁸⁵ Mowry, Progressive Movement, 375.

⁸⁶ Roosevelt, Letters, VIII, 1394. Roosevelt to George Haven Putnam, President of the American Rights League, November 15, 1918.

⁸⁷ William Allen White, Woodrow Wilson, 366-367.

disappointment, disillusionment, and bitterness, which culminated in his physical destruction--a condition which was sustained until his end. Theodore Roosevelt, on the other hand, was enjoying for the first time in a decade the taste of real political success. The clouds of gloom were partially gone. The extreme sadness which pervaded the halls of Sagamore Hill, however, emanating from his son Quentin's death, prevented Colonel Roosevelt from looking to the future with enthusiasm and ambition.

Chapter
in history was coming to a close. Through the last three months of the election campaign, he had made two speaking tours. This physical exertion plus the mental anguish from the loss of his son Quentin had been and were continuing to sap his vitality. Despite his confinement, however, the Colonel continued to work against the Wilson League of Nations and for the type of international organization in which he believed.

Throughout his career, Roosevelt had shown an understanding of America's growing interests and increasing importance in world affairs. As early as 1910, he had spoken in behalf of a form of international organization of states. Especially during the years 1914 and 1915, he repeatedly endorsed the idea.¹ His correspondence with his friend Van Valkenburg, moreover, indicated him to be an ardent advocate of a league. But at this time, as he argued in the later years, he contended that the country's primary

¹ *Survey, Progressive Movement*, 376.

CHAPTER VIII

FINISHED AND UNFINISHED BUSINESS

With the advent of Armistice Day, 1918, Theodore Roosevelt, for the second time within a year, was forced to undergo hospitalization. The strenuous life was collecting its toll; and though he sometimes spoke and wrote with eager anticipation of the future, many of his last letters revealed a tone which indicated that his chapter in history was coming to a close. Through the last three months of the election campaign, he had made two speaking tours. This physical exertion plus the mental anguish from the loss of his son Quentin had been and were continuing to sap his vitality. Despite his confinement, however, the Colonel continued to work against the Wilson League of Nations and for the type of international organization in which he believed.

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¹ Mowry, *Progressive Movement*, 376.

responsibility was to arm itself in the interests of its own self-defense. It would then be in a position to work meaningfully within an international organization for the purpose of maintaining world peace. How could we aid in imposing our will on anyone else, he reasoned, when we are not in a position to do so militarily.² It was obvious throughout his entire discussion and debate of this issue that he believed the success of a league in enforcing peace in the world could be achieved only by working from a position of military strength. He put absolutely no faith in anything less forceful. To him, Wilson's theories on the League were "much" less forceful and fell in the "domain of empty and windy eloquence." He warned of the fate that would befall the President when the point was reached that he had to "make definite the things for which he stands."³

Though Roosevelt made many unhappy remarks about the President's plans for a league, it cannot be said that he was a critic without ideas of his own. Instead of a league of "nations", he believed that there should be a league of the "Allies". Under such an arrangement, there would be a much greater chance for the survival and success of the organization, because of the integration which these countries had already achieved in bringing about the overthrow of the "hideous despotism" of the Central Powers.

² Wister, Friendship, 336.

³ Roosevelt, Letters, VIII, 1418. Roosevelt to Henry J. Haskell of The Kansas City Star, December 28, 1918.

And no nation, he said, that had been acting as a criminal should be admitted to the league "until after a sufficient number of years to satisfy us."⁴ He further believed that each member nation should have reserved to itself the right to decide which international questions were "non justifiable."⁵ Being the nationalist that he was, it was clear that he would fight any encroachment on the sovereignty of his country.⁶ Roosevelt contended that our participation in an international peace organization would necessarily be a move over and above preparation for our own national defense; under no circumstance could it be a substitute for defense. To him this was an extremely important point, and he emphasized this when he wrote to James Bryce: "I am not willing to play the part which even Aesop held up to derision when he wrote of how the wolves and the sheep agreed to disarm, and how the sheep as a guarantee of good faith sent away the watchdogs, and were then forthwith eaten by the wolves."⁷ "Uncle Sam must, in the last analysis," insisted the former President, "rely on himself

⁴ Roosevelt, Letters, VIII, 1393. Roosevelt to W. W. Davies of Australia, November 14, 1918.

⁵ Bishop, Roosevelt, 470.

⁶ Mowry, Progressive Movement, 377. To Albert J. Beveridge on October 31, 1918, Roosevelt wrote: "I am for saying with a bland smile whatever Nationalism demands. I will then adopt with that extra consideration any wise and feasible plan for limiting the possible area and likelihood of future wars." Roosevelt, Letters, VIII, 1385.

⁷ Ibid., 1400. Roosevelt to James Bryce, November 19, 1918.

for his safety, and not on scraps of paper signed by others."⁸

Roosevelt was quick to admit that he did not put much faith in the Wilson League of Nations, or in "any corresponding universal cure-all."⁹ Any promise that a league would definitely do away with war, he reminded, "is either sheer nonsense or rank hypocrisy."¹⁰ While he felt that the League might "do a little good," he reasoned that "the more pompous it is and the more it pretends to do, the less it will really accomplish." Drawing upon his excellent knowledge of history, Roosevelt said that the talk about the League had a "grimly humorous suggestion of the talk about the Holy Alliance" and its purpose of maintaining perpetual peace. "The Czar Alexander, by the way," chided Roosevelt, "was the President Wilson of this, this particular movement a century ago."¹¹

That Roosevelt was playing partisan politics with the League issue is a contention that has often been made since the Armistice. Regardless of the validity of such an assertion, the former President was adamant in his beliefs regarding the nature of any organization which might be formed; and he expressed these views regardless of their

⁸ Hagedorn, Sagamore Hill, 420.

⁹ Roosevelt, Letters, VIII, 1414. Roosevelt to H. R. Haggard, December 6, 1918.

¹⁰ Hagedorn, Sagamore Hill, 420.

¹¹ Roosevelt, Letters, VIII, 1413. Roosevelt to P.C. Knox, December 6, 1918.

conflict with others, Democrat or Republican. One instance is his rather caustic counter assertion to his good Republican friend Leonard Wood's declaration that there is "nothing more dangerous than the world court and the League of Nations idea." "I am for such a league as I have outlined," Roosevelt asserted, "a league which, however, has nothing in common with the policies of Messrs. Wilson and Taft."¹²

Perhaps the most comprehensive collection of the Roosevelt views on the League of Nations appears in an article which he wrote three days before his death for The Kansas City Star. The Star, because of the immense moment of the issues before the Peace Conference at that time, had requested Roosevelt to give his countrymen the benefit of his discussions of the possibilities of a league of nations as a preventative of war. Although he consented to do this, he told the newspaper that he expected to follow the league editorial with one "on what I regard as infinitely more important, namely, our business to prepare for our own self-defense." This latter article, was never written; however, his league article appeared on the front page of the Star on January 13, 1919, one week following his death. In editorial comment preceding the former President's words, the newspaper reminded its readers that the expressions following represented Roosevelt's "matured judgment based on protracted discussion and correspondence. It is of peculiar importance as the last message of a man who above every-

¹² Mowry, Progressive Movement, 376.

other American of his generation combined high patriotism, practical sense, and a positive genius for international relations." Because of the significance to this study of this last Roosevelt editorial effort, its text is here quoted:¹³

It is of course a serious misfortune that our people are not getting a clear idea of what is happening on the other side. For the moment, the point as to which we are foggy is the League of Nations. We all of course earnestly desire such a league, only we wish to be sure that it will help and not hinder the cause of world peace and justice.... In any such movement if too much is attempted the result is either failure or worse than failure.

The trouble with Mr. Wilson's utterances so far as they are reported...is that they are still absolutely in the stage of rhetoric precisely like the fourteen points. Some of the fourteen points will probably have to be construed as having a mischievous significance, a smaller number might be construed as being harmless, and one or two even as beneficial, but nobody knows what Mr. Wilson really means by them, and so all talk of adopting them as basis for a peace or a league is nonsense.... So Mr. Wilson's recent utterances give us absolutely no clew as to whether he really intends that at this moment we shall admit Germany, Russia, with which, incidentally, we are still waging war, Turkey, China and Mexico into the league on a full equality with ourselves. Mr. Taft has recently defined the purposes of the league and the limitations under which it would act, in a way that enables most of us to say we very heartily agree in principle with

¹³ The Star's columns state that this article was dictated to his secretary at Sagamore Hill on Friday, January 3rd, and it was expected that she would take the typed copy to him for correction the following Monday. At 4:15 a.m. on that Monday morning, January 6th, Theodore Roosevelt died. There was an ensuing delay of several days before this editorial reached the Star for its publication. The Kansas City Star, January 13, 1919, 1.

his theory and can, without doubt, come to an agreement on specific details.

Would it not be well to begin with the league which we actually have in existence, the League of the Allies who have fought through this great war? Let us at the peace table see that real justice is done as among these allies, and that while the sternest reparation is demanded from our foes for such horrors as those committed in Belgium, Northern France, Armenia, and the sinking of the Lusitania, nothing should be done in the spirit of mere vengeance. Then let us agree to extend the privileges of the League as their conduct warrants it to other nations, doubtless discriminating between those who would have a guiding part in the League and the weak nations who would be entitled to the privileges of membership, but who would not be entitled to a guiding voice in the councils. Let each nation reserve to itself and for its own decision, and let it clearly set forth questions which are non-justicable. Let nothing be done that will interfere with our preparing for our own defense by introducing a system of universal obligatory military training modeled on the Swiss plan.

Finally, make it perfectly clear that we do not intend to take a position of an international Meddlesome Matty. The American people do not wish to go into an overseas war unless for a very great cause and where the issue is absolutely plain.... The American people do not intend to give up the Monroe Doctrine. Let civilized Europe and Asia introduce some kind of a police system in the weak and disorderly countries at their thresholds. But let the United States treat Mexico as our Balkan peninsula and refuse to allow European or Asiatic powers to interfere on this continent in any way that implies permanent or semi-permanent possession. Every one of our allies will with delight grant this request if President Wilson chooses to make it and it will be a great misfortune if it is not made.

I believe that such an effort made moderately and sanely, but sincerely and with utter scorn for words that are not made good by deeds, will be productive of real and lasting international good.

Because of Roosevelt's death at a time when the great debate over American participation in the League of Nations was only beginning, it became a practice of both sides of the argument to quote Roosevelt in the substantiation of their positions. It is true that he favored an international organization for the promotion of peace. But while he supported the idea of "a" league, he could not endorse "the" League, Wilson's League. His position might be termed a compromise between the extremes. Perhaps the most-asked question is what actions the Colonel would have taken had he lived through the period of debate. Mowry and Pringle agree that Roosevelt would have joined Lodge and the "battalion of death" in killing the League, which was designed and presented so uncompromisingly by Wilson. Had the former President returned to the White House after 1920, Mowry speculates he would have remained an ardent nationalist, but something might have been salvaged from the peace--which was not a peace at all. Roosevelt, who had always favored some measure of international cooperation, would not, however, as President of the United States, have led his country into joining the League of Nations without drastic reservations. But, suggests Mowry, the American nation, regardless of its organizational affiliation and under the leadership of one who understood his country's growing interest in the world family of nations, would have fulfilled its newly-adopted obligations to world society.¹⁴

¹⁴ Mowry, Progressive Movement, 377.

President It is significant to note that in his declining days, Roosevelt was mentioned as a possible member of the President's peace party to Versailles, but neither his physical condition nor his temperament would have permitted such a role.¹⁵ As fate dictated, his presence in such a group would have been of little consequence, for his end came soon after the U. S. delegation arrived in France. The momentous decisions were yet to be made at the time of his death.

To William Allen White, who visited him in his hospital room and discussed the forthcoming presidential election Roosevelt did not live to fight in the great national battle over the League of Nations, and he did not live to throw his hat into the 1920 presidential ring. In some manner or another he would have been a most active participant in both struggles. If he expressed unconcern over the 1920 race because of family conditions, the urge to become immersed in politics seemed always to be irresistible to him, even in his dying days. In reply to questions concerning his intentions for 1920, the former

¹⁵ On December 4th, 1918, President Wilson sailed for France with his delegation consisting of Secretary Lansing, Colonel House, General Tasker H. Bliss, Henry White, and various experts and secretaries. The selection of White, the only Republican in the group, was criticized by his fellow party members because his Republicanism was not active enough to please them. Roosevelt, it is said, was preferred by his party's leadership; but this undoubtedly was never considered as a serious suggestion--there being no evidence that any amount of harmony could result from his participation in the proceedings. John Spencer Bassett, Our War With Germany (New York, 1919), 336-37.

¹⁶ Nowry, Progressive Movement, 375-376.

President, late in 1918, said: "I am indifferent to the subject; since Quentin's death the world seems to have shut down upon me. If my other boys do not come back, what would the Presidency mean to me...? But if I do consent it will be because as President I could accomplish some things that I should like to see accomplished before I die.... And, by George, if they take me, they will take me without a single modification of the things I have always stood for."¹⁶

To William Allen White, who visited him in his hospital room and discussed the forthcoming presidential election, the Colonel remarked: "Well, probably I shall have to get in this thing by June [1919]."¹⁷ Hence to the very last, the spirit of the Rough Rider existed; he battled with himself and with his seeming undying desire to return to the White House.

Mowry states that only a week before his death Roosevelt told his friends that the Republican Convention would nominate him in 1920; and, there is little doubt in Mowry's mind that he would have given his eyeteeth to have been elected President once again. This would have been the perfect culmination of a historic life. His election in 1920 would have been "ample balm" for 1912 and 1916, and would have been a popular vindication of his struggle with Wilson.¹⁸

¹⁶ Sullivan, Over Here, 502.

¹⁷ White, Autobiography, 548.

¹⁸ Mowry, Progressive Movement, 375-376.

There was significance in the timing of Roosevelt's death. Mowry sees in his passing the end of a twenty-year-old political movement. With him went the last hope of any effective progressive action in the Republican Party for at least two decades.¹⁹ For as the Bull Moose was making his exit from the political stage, Calvin Coolidge made his entry from the right wing. William Allen White is certain that had Roosevelt lived he would have been nominated and elected. Furthermore, White suggests that the future economic development of the United States might have been something entirely different from what it was. "The country would have had, in workable terms, from a Republican administration, much of the social program that came a dozen years later under the second Roosevelt. It would have been adopted in normal times. We should have had the little end of the wedge. It would not have disturbed economic and industrial traffic, and a great cataclysm might have been avoided."²⁰ Unlike Mr. Wilson, I have never erred. Theodore Roosevelt had played the role as Wilson's antagonist to the hilt for almost five years. At every turn he was the experienced and masterful politician; he was also the patriot supreme--one who loved his country dearly and deeply regretted that the one life which he had could not be given for it. The appropriately mixed portions of patriotism and politics were undoubtedly the forces which caused him to be labelled as the greatest American of his time.

¹⁹ Mowry, Progressive Movement, 377. Roosevelt to Carroll

²⁰ White, Autobiography, 549. Clinton, Iowa, January

Roosevelt was a great leader--it was his natural bent to lead. And he did not shrink at the thought of defeat, if defeat meant standing up for what he considered morally and intellectually right. He was not an egotist such as he was accused of being by his enemies; moreover, he did not always wither at the thought of admitting mistakes, as has also often been contended. True, he did have an abundance of ego, but observations seem to indicate a willingness on his part to confess errors approximately to the extent that is humanly characteristic. In addition to his little-known mental depressions, perhaps the following extracts from his correspondence with a total stranger reveal to some degree that he was a man who practiced at least some introspection--a soul-searching which probably came especially as a result of the antagonistic reactions to his criticisms of Wilson. "I have frequently erred in judgment and have said so," he pointed out. But he countered: "Unlike Mr. Wilson, I have never erred in intellectual honesty and moral straightforwardness.... I never erred but once and that was on the occasion in question, when for the first sixty days after the outbreak of the World War I heartily supported him. This was a mistake, but it was a generous mistake from proper motives. I have never erred when I opposed him."²¹

It is true that Theodore Roosevelt had boundless confidence in himself, and that this virtue often was

²¹ Roosevelt, Letters, VIII, 1421. Roosevelt to Carroll E. Armstrong, hardwareman of Clinton, Iowa, January 3, 1919.

translated by others as supreme conceit cannot be too surprising. Had it not been for this characteristic, however, so many historians would not have found his personality to be the object of their affections. Roosevelt's self-confidence led him to speak his opinions quite frankly. This, coupled with the fact that he was a leader who was ahead of his time on many issues, led to the label "extremeness" being placed on numerous of his statements. Recognizing this tag, Roosevelt asserted that his "extremeness one year is another person's moderation later,"²² and history has borne him out.²³

He would not deny any portion of his ravings at Wilson. He was in the difficult position of being an ex-President, and as a highly patriotic individual he felt that there was a definite service which he could perform for his country. That duty as he came to interpret it through his actions was in the nature of being the people's watchdog against a President and an administration which might not always act in their best interests. "My duty,"

²² Bishop, Roosevelt, 466. From his speech in support of the New York Republican ticket, October 28, 1918.

²³ Roosevelt seemed to enjoy his talents as a phrase-maker, and he knowingly injected humor into his biting criticisms through the use of these original creations. Many times, of course, though using a phrase merely for the purpose of making a point, he was subject to the criticism of being extreme in his words. One of the best examples of this perhaps appeared when he was bemoaning the fact that the U.S. was not doing its duty in the world. This country, he asserted, was running neck and neck with the Chinese as "the greatest of yellow nations." Mowry, Progressive Movement, 366.

lack of warmth toward England. Ibid., 790.

he is quoted as having stated, "is to oppose him [Wilson] where he goes wrong...and, in a reasonable number of cases, I make him go fairly right."²⁴ With proper justification, however, many persons who attempted to be objective in evaluating the role of Theodore Roosevelt would agree with Pringle that his services toward his country and toward preparedness were marred by his bitter attitude toward President Wilson. His spoken and written charges against his Democratic adversary were lacking in tolerance and trust, and were permeated with undue hatred.²⁵

Roosevelt felt that his task as the exponent of preparedness had as its corollary the role of propagandist --at home and abroad. He was rather proud of his efforts in this regard. Because he believed that his stand was that of true Americanism, he did not deviate from his goal of attempting to win the American people to his views. Nor did he hesitate to advise his foreign friends in the Allied countries how to win American support.²⁶ Early in the war, the former President somewhat secretly²⁷ became dedicated to the Allied (especially the British) cause, and at the same time came to be an unofficial, if not unsolicited

²⁴ Hagedorn, Sagamore Hill, 421.

²⁵ Pringle, Roosevelt, 585.

²⁶ Buchanan, "Roosevelt and Neutrality," 782.

²⁷ In private conversation and correspondence Roosevelt displayed an extreme friendship for Britain; however, publicly he remained impartial. So successful was he at this deliberate "cover-up" that he was criticized by the editor of the London Spectator for his lack of warmth toward England. Ibid., 790.

advisor to his highly placed British friends regarding matters involving America. From all evidence, his advice did not go unheeded. There came to be a close correlation between Roosevelt's suggestions to the British and their subsequent actions in behalf of winning American favor. He thus frequently is seen as having displayed his art of propaganda to the "less artful" British.²⁸

Among the many charges that were hurled at the former President was that of being a war monger and a "bloodthirsty anarchist". In a personal interview, he emphatically denied that he could be so accused. As President of the United States for seven and a half years, he pointed out, our forces never fired a single shot at a foreign foe, despite various complications and his insistence on protecting American citizens throughout the world. Admitting that war is a very terrible thing which should be avoided by every decent means, he emphasized that he did not "regard it as the worst conceivable thing in the world." "I think some things are even more to be avoided than war," he asserted. Furthermore, being a

²⁸ Two examples of this apparent influence are here given: (1) Roosevelt in late 1914 called on the British to publish an official report on Germany's atrocities. Some six months later, after the sinking of the Lusitania, the Bryce Report on atrocities was released; (2) to the British, Roosevelt attributed a rise in American opinion favorable to Germany to their helpful treatment of our war correspondents, while Britain and France on the other hand were treating them badly. Five months after this reminder, official British policy toward American correspondents was modified. Ibid., 787.

³¹ Collier's, "Roosevelt As A Prophet," ed., LVI (October 23, 1915), 6.

family man with four sons, he felt that any parent should know "whether I want to see my four boys go off to fight."²⁹ His clamorous activities in promoting preparedness and the persistency with which he attacked its opponents naturally brought to him the charge that he was using this issue for opportunistic purposes. Roosevelt's advocacy of national preparedness, however, could not be so construed honestly. "Everyone who will take the trouble to find out may ascertain," he was quick to point out, "[that] I have been shouting preparedness at the top of my lungs for and thirty-five years."³⁰ Collier's Magazine editorially substantiated his statements in regard to this point by listing almost a dozen quotes from his utterances of twelve to twenty years previous which showed that his thinking on preparedness had been consistent through the years.³¹

Indeed it can be said that Theodore Roosevelt lived a Spartan life. His entire existence was one of rigid discipline, both physical and mental. He fought for his goals in the same manner that he lived his everyday life--with vigorousness and with abiding and undiverted attention. He preached loud and long for the ideas to which he was dedicated, using to the limit the forces of his pen, his unclear voice, and his storehouse of histrionics. In

²⁹ Julia Street, "The Most Interesting American," Collier's, LVI (October 23, 1915), 25. This article was based on a personal interview which the author had with ex-President Roosevelt.

³⁰ Roosevelt, Letters, VIII, 1004. Roosevelt to Willard Ibid., 6.

³¹ Collier's, "Roosevelt As A Prophet," ed., LVI (October 23, 1915), 6.

his later years as he championed the cause of preparedness, he was often accused of overstating his attitude. "I do not believe I do overstate....," he told one critic; "of course, I have got to be emphatic to attract attention."³² Thus, though his character consisted of a conglomeration and an amalgamation of facets, regardless of their peculiarity or orthodoxy he was fully aware of their existence and he made full use of every one. Contrary to the usual characteristics of the extremely busy and highly bombastic person, Roosevelt was a thinker. His mind was quick and flexible. He enjoyed the challenges which came from thinking and concentration on subjects in many fields; and the views he expressed not only merited the most serious consideration, but in many cases proved to be words of a seer.

It seems unfortunate that the talents of two such outstanding liberals and two such magnificent leaders as Roosevelt and Wilson could not have been blended in some manner so as to have caused a unity of purpose and effort. Instead, their labors and their emotions too often worked diametrically to one another's, resulting in a most furious struggle between themselves and between the forces which they represented. Perhaps the temper of the times was best characterized in later years by Colonel Roosevelt's daughter,

³² Roosevelt, Letters, VIII, 1004. Roosevelt to Willard D. Straight, January 13, 1916.

Mrs. Nicholas Longworth, who is quoted as having said:

"How we did cherish and nourish our hatreds in those days!"³³

The story of Theodore Roosevelt was that of a man whose patriotism and love of politics created a spirit within him which motivated him into a life of perpetual restlessness. Certainly nothing could do the character of Theodore Roosevelt less justice than a plaster bust.

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³³ Thomas A. Bailey, Woodrow Wilson and the Great Betrayal (New York, 1945), 40.

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